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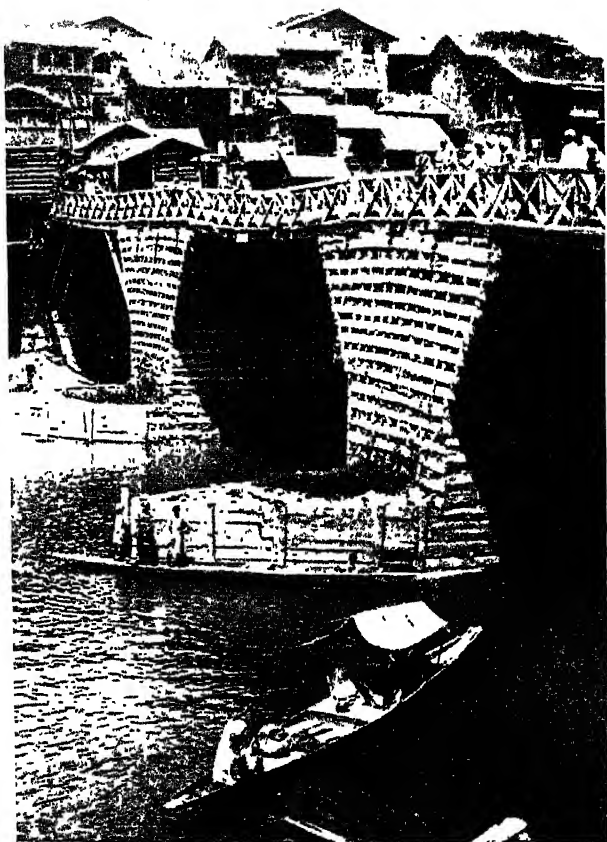
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THINGS SEEN IN KASHMIR



ONE OF THE SEVEN BRIDGES

The houses of Srinagar are picturesque but dilapidated. Many are roofed with sheets of birch bark, covered with a thick layer of earth, on which grass & even flowers grow. A shikara boat is going under the bridge

THINGS SEEN IN KASHMIR

A DESCRIPTION OF ONE OF THE LOVELIEST COUNTRIES OF
THE WORLD, WITH ITS BEAUTIFUL LAKES & RIVERS;
ITS PICTURESQUE TOWN & COUNTRY LIFE

BY
ERNEST F. NEVE, M.D., F.R.C.S.

AUTHOR OF
"Beyond the Pir Panjal,"
&c., &c.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS & SKETCH MAP

London
Seeley, Service & Co. Limited
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1931

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Printed in Great Britain

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To
MY WIFE

■

Author's Note

SIXTEEN years ago, I published and illustrated a book entitled, *Beyond the Pir Panjal*. This contained a full description of the Valley of Kashmir. Two reprints were issued; but it has long been out of print.

In writing the present little volume, I have made many quotations and extracts from this work.

Most of the illustrations are from my own photographs. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking my friends for permission to use theirs.

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Note for Readers who Intend to Visit Kashmir

FROM April to November inclusive the climate of Kashmir is delightful. From about June 15th to the middle of September the Valley of Kashmir and Srinagar are, however, uncomfortably warm. The maximum temperature indeed may then range between 85° and 100° F. Owing to the submerged rice fields and the Lakes the atmosphere is humid. It feels rather like the interior of a Kew Gardens conservatory ! Mosquitoes abound. This is the time to migrate to one of the hill stations—Gulmarg or Pahlgam,—or to go into camp among the mountains. Three or four thousand feet above the Valley the climate at this season is perfect.

April, May, October and November are pleasant months in the Valley of Kashmir. Most residents and visitors live in houseboats, of which there are a large number on the river and also on the Dal Lake. Many of these houseboats are very comfortable and commodious. Hotel and boarding house accommodation is limited and it is advisable to make early application.



ON THE ROAD

Tongas & ekkas are being superseded by motor cars & lorries. But the ekka, which is still to be met with on the Jhelum Valley Road, is a primitive vehicle, springless but well balanced with ample room for baggage.

Things Seen in Kashmir

CHAPTER I

THE APPROACH

A hundred miles of snow-clad mountain peak
On either side uprear their heads to heaven,
And, flecked with light and shade and yellow foam,
Broad-bosomed Jhelum wends his stately way.

C. R. TOLLEMACHE.

AS, travelling north, we approach Rawal Pindi, the railway terminus for Kashmir, we cross a broad river, which has emerged from the mountains. The great Pir Panjál range, snow-capped and stretching up in many places to over 15,000 feet above sea level, would almost appear to oppose an impenetrable barrier to the outflow of this noble stream, the Jhelum river, the Hydaspes of classical literature.

On the other side of that stupendous mountain chain lies the far famed Valley of Kashmir. For more than a hundred miles the river has made its way, round mighty spurs, through chasms, down gorges, often a foaming torrent, but sometimes smooth and pale green, although eddies and swirls bear witness to its recent struggles.

From Kohala, the river is accompanied by the Jhelum Valley Road. How interesting is this thin white line, which connects the Punjab with the

The Approach

mountain kingdom—this artery, which pulsates with life and transmits its daily freight of passengers, merchandise and varied produce! Even the maintenance of the road is a blessing to every district through which it passes. The relation of the engineer-in-charge is semi-patriarchal. The road navvies are really cultivators. They accept the responsibility for repairs and metalling, much as if it were part of their ordinary agricultural work, and they find it a very lucrative branch of employment. No strikes or industrial warfare mar the peace of the long river valley. There is no “drink” problem, and if brains are not so acute nor work so skilled as in the West, still, patient hands in great number carry out the mandates of their chief.

As a feat of engineering the road is sufficiently remarkable, with its alignment, now bending round the face of a giddy precipice, anon dropping gently down to the very bank of the river and then zig-zagging with easy gradient up some slope of formidable steepness. No difficulty has been too great. When confronted by some craggy spur, massive and impassable, seeming to block all progress, the track pierces the cliffs and emerges triumphantly on the other side of the rocky tunnel.

The Kashmir end is the more beautiful part. Here the road runs through magnificent scenery. A former Viceroy, the late Lord Lansdowne, previously Governor General of Canada, speaking to the writer of the views in the neighbourhood of Rampore, said that nothing which he had seen in the Dominion had impressed him more.

Of surpassing beauty are the snows of the Káj

The Approach

Nág group of peaks, with their pine-crested cliffs and glistening slopes plunging down into deep liquid violet shade. Until quite recently those sky-cleaving crags and deep mysterious gorges were one of the most famous haunts of the *Markhor*.

Thundering away at the bottom of the great valley is the once stately Jhelum, no longer calm, smooth and majestic, but tossed and fretted by opposition, dashing itself in impetuous fury against rock and cliff, surging and swirling, beaten into foam, pulverized into spray, and yet never arrested. Even this restless river has, however, been partly disciplined and brought into subjection, as is testified by the great power house at Mahora, close to Rampore. A strong head of water, conveyed from the river in a six-mile flume along the mountain face and then abruptly dropping down, works powerful turbines. These generate and supply electrical power for the Valley of Kashmir and its Capital, the city of Srinagar.

The scale of scenery between Uri and Rampore is stupendous. Rampore is over-shadowed by a towering cliff of bare basalt. All along the road, the twists and contortions of strata bear witness to Titanic forces of upheaval and shrinkage. The deep cutting of the river has left its evidence in precipices built up of massive boulders. After heavy rain the landslides are numerous and passengers sometimes have to run the gauntlet.

On one occasion, in one place, I saw a deep ragged depression in the hard metallated surface of the road, evidently recently caused by a rock falling from a great height. Further on, a massive boulder, four feet in circumference, plunged down the

The Approach

face of the mountain and whizzed across the road only six yards in front of the mail cart in which I was travelling. Occasionally, in a case where the bullet has found its billet, my surgical services have been required. I remember one instance in particular, where a British officer received an injury to the head so severe as to necessitate his ultimate loss to the Service.

Where the road is constructed along very steep slopes, or actual precipices, heavy rain will often cause dangerous breaches. Sometimes a motor car has to be pushed and dragged by manual labour across a narrow neck of road, on which there is barely room for the outer wheels. Ordinarily the edge is guarded, in all dangerous places, by a low stone parapet or by ponderous boulders. Sometimes even these are insufficient and every now and then there is a catastrophe—a car goes over the edge and plunges into the abyss—a disaster almost always attended by loss of life. On one occasion, owing to a momentary lapse on the part of a well-known and skilled driver, the car plunged through the railings of a bridge and fell 80 feet into the bed of a stream. Strange to say the occupants escaped with their lives; but the driver's leg had to be amputated and the passengers were badly injured.

Until comparatively recently the journey was done in mail cars, or tongas as they were called, with a change of ponies every 5 miles. In some ways this was pleasanter than travelling in a motor car as there was opportunity to see more of the scenery and occasionally to get out and walk. For such heavy work ponies of great strength were required.

The Approach

Among the large number employed, not a few were eccentric or even vicious. I have been on a tonga, the ponies of which tried to charge straight up the mountain side. Often they used to back, until the wheels crashed into the parapet, always an alarming experience. There were many minor tricks ; there is the pony which has a gift for kicking mud into your face. Another spirited but vicious beast, in trying to kick its mate, will get its hind leg over the pole.

Even, when going up hill, I have known one animal to have sufficient superfluous energy to kick a strip $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet long out of the heavy splash board. They seldom came down. Once, when I was descending the Murree Hill with a heavy tonga and only one pony, it fell and was driven by the impetus along the road for a yard or two. The deep dust saved it. On another occasion both ponies fell—one was pinned down by the pole, and yoke bar, and the other pony fell on to the head of the former. This, also, was as we were going down hill at a hard gallop. The top pony was uninjured. We had to be very quick to relieve the lower one, which had a narrow escape from strangling and was badly bruised and cut. The most curious experience which I had on this road was when a buffalo bull, on a narrow stretch of the road, with a sharp drop below, disputed our passage. The driver, very wisely, whipped up his ponies. The buffalo charged into the side of the cart, his horns were entangled in the wheel and he was very neatly thrown and got the shock of his life and a lesson in manners.

In those days, with the extraordinarily heavy

The Approach

traffic, the condition of the ponies was always a cause for anxiety. Sore backs and girth galls appeared to be inevitable. The increasing employment of motor cars and lorries is now affording great relief.

As we travel towards Kashmir, here and there troops of monkeys may be seen. Flocks of gorgeously plumaged birds dart in and out of the foliage of the Himalayan oak. The hillsides are covered with scrub, among which we see the wild oleander, various species of viburnum, the hill box and the olive. The air is still warm and, in places, the broad leaves of the plantain stand out in pleasing contrast to the rich red soil. As we ascend, we pass through groups of *Pinus Longifolia* with warm toned trunks and sparkling needles. But after Chikoti, the air becomes cold and bracing and the slopes are clothed with the Himalayan spruce, the silver fir, and the graceful blue pine. In the spring the roadsides are fringed with violets. Groups of lovely mauve primulas cling to the dripping cliffs. Dense clusters of exquisitely fimbriated ferns, such as the *Pteris Pellucida*, nestle against projecting rocks or the stumps of trees. As the valley narrows in places and the route becomes precipitous, flocks of blue rock pigeons spring up from the road, circle around and accompany us for a mile at a time.

Such is the Jhelum Valley Road, the link between India and Asia, the path of escape from the fiery heat of the plains, the animated scene, in the month of April, of a ceaseless pilgrimage to the cool and green flowery margs, the shady fir forests and dazzling snows of Kashmir.



A ROPE BRIDGE

The river is spanned by very few bridges, scores of miles apart. Bridges of twisted birch twigs, & strands of rope, enable villagers to cross the intervening stretches. To those unaccustomed it is an interesting & exciting experience !

The Approach

The khansaman (steward), at the first rest house, in the Valley of Kashmir, is inclined to talk. He is short and stout. His beard is dyed with henna and he wears a voluminous turban.

“ Yes, Sahib, I have been here many years and my father before me, in the days of the earthquake. I shall never forget that time. I was a little boy. Thousands perished. The earth opened into great cracks and sulphur and steam poured out. A great piece of that hill to the south over there came sliding down. The villagers say that it was one of their saints turning in his tomb. My father says that ten years earlier, in Nicháma, a village near by, flames burst forth out of the ground. If you go there, you will see that the ground is red and looks like burnt brick. Middlemiss Sahib found black stones which will burn in the fire, so I suppose there was a fire down below. One of our Maulvies says that it is Hell there, and that the sun goes down every night to get warmed up. What do you think, Sahib ? ”

CHAPTER II

THE VALE OF KASHMIR

A vale of purple glens and snow-cold streams,
Broad meadows lush with verdure, flower and fruit,
The broad-leaved maple towering in his pride,
The temple's noble ruin on the height ;
The poplar lines that mark the homestead there,
Calm lakes that bear the lotus on their breast.

C. R. TOLLEMACHE.

WHERE in the whole world is there anything more beautiful than the Valley of Kashmir?

The natural comparison is with Switzerland and Italy. Indeed in some respects these countries are wonderfully like Kashmir. In the mountainous districts, away from towns and hotels, a string of baggage ponies or a line of laden coolies, if seen, would complete the illusion that we were in the Himalayas. The real difference is of course that the scale in the East is immensely larger, the sun heat is, in the summer, much greater, and the lower mountain slopes are not so verdant as in Europe. In Switzerland, on a flowery meadow, such as the Blumenthal, above Mürren, we stand, at an altitude of over 5,000 feet, and look at the magnificent panorama of the Eiger, the Mönch and the Jungfrau, a line of snowy peaks and domes which face us and tower up to over 13,000 feet, or 8,000 feet above us. In Kashmir, for a similar view, we should probably

The Vale of Kashmir

be looking from an altitude of 9,000 or 10,000 feet at peaks ranging up to 16,000 to 20,000 feet, or even more. The level of perpetual snow and of glacier is much lower in Switzerland and Italy. The rainfall is greater, and to this Switzerland owes its wonderful areas of hayfields with their profuse and varied floral display. In Kashmir, on either side of the River Jhelum, there is an extended area of flat alluvial plain. This is not meadow land but is devoted to the cultivation of rice. Early in the year the fields are flooded to a depth of a few inches and the rice grows in the standing water. Soon the whole valley is carpeted with verdure. Girt by mighty mountain ranges, many of the snow-capped peaks of which are higher than Mt. Blanc, the Vale of Kashmir has been aptly compared to an emerald set in pearls.

In the spring, the landscape is full of colour. Sheets of pale pink almond blossom, on the hillsides, dip down into broad stretches of brilliant yellow mustard. The tender green of young wheat contrasts with the rich madder brown of newly ploughed fields. Innumerable willows with orange coloured branches and pale yellow green feathery foliage are massed together in the hollows, or form lines across the middle distance. Away beyond is the deep blue of the foot hills, with above them the pure white surface and serrated crest of lofty mountains, still mantled in winter snow, upon which there is perpetual play of sunshine chasing shadow.

The almond blossom has hardly passed its climax of beauty and sprinkled the turf below with its petals, before the gardens and orchards are lighted up by the snowy white of flowering apricot trees.

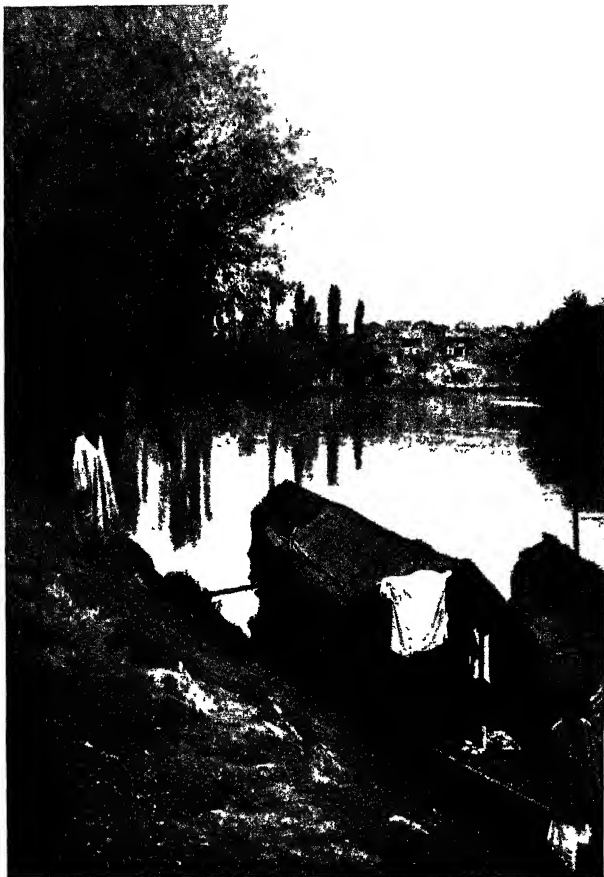
The Vale of Kashmir

Then peach trees put forth their exquisite pink blossom. The bright sunshine causes these to stand out with peculiar brilliance against the azure sky. On banks, and even on the earth-covered roofs of houses, groups of orange-red crown imperial lilies, or clusters of large scarlet tulips introduce a brilliant touch of colour. In the midst of the soft velvety turf are clumps of white and purple iris, the scent of which mingles with that of the May bushes which are in full blossom. The beauty of this season appeals to every sense.

The Vale of Kashmir may be compared to an immense oval amphitheatre 90 miles long and 15 broad. Its long axis extends obliquely from north-west to south-east. All around are terraced rice-fields and, as we go higher, Indian corn and then, above all cultivation, on the south side, are vast tracts of fir forest. The arena is a great alluvial plain which is under cultivation. It holds a population of about 150 to the square mile—altogether considerably over a million.

The contour of the oval is of course very irregular, for it is broken by projecting ridges and broad receding valleys. The most important of these usher down the various tributaries of the Jhelum river. For instance the Lidar, Sind and Pohru rivers flow in from the east and the Veshau and Dudhganga from the south-west. The Jhelum itself follows a very tortuous course near the north-east side of the valley. Here, owing to its sloping southern aspect, the land is warmer and drier, and the crops ripen earlier than those on the opposite side of the river.

One striking physical peculiarity of Kashmir is



ON THE RIVER JHELUM

A Kashmiri village, with snow-capped range in the background. The doonga house-boat accommodates the boatman & his family. They take turns in towing the boat, cooking the food & minding the baby.

The Vale of Kashmir

the difference in appearance between the mountains on the north side and those on the south side of the valley. The northern range, with its slopes which face south, loses its snow quickly. Its slopes are treeless and bare. They are clothed with long grass which soon dries up under the scorching heat of the sun. Great destruction is often caused by accidental fires, which spread with great rapidity and denude the hillsides. The barrenness is thus still further accentuated and perpetuated. It is a wonderful sight, at night, to watch the progress of one of these devastating conflagrations as it sweeps along the heights above the valley.

The slopes on the other side of the valley, with a northern aspect, are absolutely different. Here the snow lingers on. There is dense forest. This promotes the frequency of rainfall and the retention of moisture ; so the hillside is clothed with verdure. All through Kashmir this is the rule. The slopes on the north side are bare ; those on the south side are forest-clad.

The great mountain barrier which divides Kashmir from the plains of northern India is known as the Pir Panjál range. A serrated line of rocky arête-joined peaks rising from fields of perpetual snow, this mountain chain stretches for a hundred miles and is the most impressive and unique feature in the scenery of Kashmir. Below is a broad band of fir forest, the haunt of black bear. Above are summits of great beauty, such as the three Brahma peaks at the south-east end of the range, whose graceful forms, the lower shoulders of which are mantled in perpetual snow, tower up to a height of 15,500 feet. Four thousand feet lower down,

The Vale of Kashmir

nestling at their base, lies the turquoise blue Kónsa Nág, a glacier-fed lake, 3 miles in length. This is the source of the Veshau river. The ascent to Kónsa Nág is made from near Shupeyon, up a long valley past the fine Haribal falls. The final climb is for 300 feet up a grass covered moraine. The lake then comes into view, lying in a hollow on the south side of the main peaks.

To the east of the Brahma peaks is the Banihal pass and the road to Jammu. To the west, the Sedau and Pir Panjál passes cross the range in two well marked gaps, separated by a group of 5 grey rocky summits, which enclose snowfields of considerable extent. Looking along the sky line, again six miles to the west, is the highest point of the whole range—Sunset Peak, so named because it is the last of the tops to catch the rays of the setting sun. This peak has a saddle back and has been climbed by the author and various friends. The ascent, which is not difficult, lies for the last three hours up a snow slope which gradually increases in steepness and culminates in a rocky arête, the southern face of which, and of the peak itself, drops as a sheer precipice some hundreds of feet. That there was volcanic action is evident from the pieces of lava which are found on the summit.

A few miles further west is Tatticooti. This is a very fine peak. It can be identified by its pyramidal shape, central notch and steep jagged western side which descends in colossal steps. It can be climbed by ascending the eastern arête. When this becomes too sharp, a ledge on the south side leads to a couloir which rejoins the main ridge higher up. The



KONSA NAG

A glacier-fed lake at the foot of the Brahma Peaks. Hindu legend tells of the pleasure cruises on it of the consort of Siva, the Goddess Párvati, who sailed across the submerged Valley of Kashmir to it from her home on Mt. Haramouk.

The Vale of Kashmir

summit (15,524 feet) is formed by blocks of trap rock standing on end, below which is a vein of white quartz.

There is a succession of upland meadows (margs) all along the Pir Panjál range. These are usually 7,000 and 9,000 feet above sea level. These margs occupy the depressions between the fir covered slopes and ridges of the higher foot hills and the crest of the main range. They have rich soil. It is not clear why they have not become covered by the forest which borders them. In many places indeed it has sent out little groups and lines of firs and pines which stand out boldly in the midst of the pasturage around. Originally these open spaces may have been occupied by glaciers. At the present time extensive grazing of herds and flocks, especially of goats, is fatal to the growth of young trees.

One of the most beautiful expeditions in Kashmir is to march along at marg level, camping day after day in most charming surroundings. All around are stretches of grassy meadow spangled with flowers, among which, columbines, balsams, anemones, larkspurs and dwarf sunflowers are conspicuous. Above and below is the great forest, through which there are frequent glimpses of the long glittering white line above and the far flung valley below.

Gulmarg, the favourite summer resort of Europeans, with its church, hotel and bazaar, its club, polo ground, golf links, and its numerous and comfortable wooden huts, is typical of many of these green valleys with undulating slopes. Situated 3,000 feet above the valley level, its climate is delightful. To this and its accessibility, it owes its selection and

The Vale of Kashmir

popularity, for it is only 30 miles by road from Srinagar. Some of the houses are built on the long fir-clothed ridge which overlooks the plain. From Gulmarg there is a magnificent view of the Vale of Kashmir and the mountains to the north. There they stand, facing us—Mahadeo, Kotwál, Haramouk, and in the distance a lofty snowy range, culminating in the beautiful peak of Nanga Parbat, the eighth highest mountain in the world. Evening after evening these mountains and the nearer peaks of the Ferozepore Nalla, close to Gulmarg, are bathed in glorious sunset colours.

The Pir Panjál has its seasons. In midwinter it is covered by deep pure snow of dazzling whiteness, against which the black cliffs and vertical faces of rock, the serrated edges and the splintered crest of the ridges, show up in sharp contrast. Long gently curved lines of snowfield stand out clearly against the sky. Deep cobalt-coloured shadows lie on the mountain side, and are prolonged downwards into an atmosphere of mauve, which drapes the lower slopes. All the upland meadows, the margs and high valleys are completely enveloped by a white mantle, many feet deep. The band of dark forest is speckled with the snow which rests on and weighs down the branches of countless firs and pines.

The scene in the winter is in some respects even more beautiful than in the summer. Already members of the Ski Club of India have demonstrated that even up till the end of February Gulmarg is an admirable centre for this delightful sport. Soon after, however, melting takes place rapidly. By that time the valley is already free of snow. Day by day the line recedes up the foot hills. A few

The Vale of Kashmir

days of warm sunshine clear the trees. The southern slopes of the margs soon become bare. Stretches of upland pasture, at this time, often present a rippled appearance. The snow, on the south side of all inequalities in the ground, melts; that on the north side remains. A bank, a tuft of grass, a furrow or clod—all act as cover to the snow and help to prolong its stay. But soon all is gone and the upper slopes begin to show, first as light brown and then as green patches. Still, however, when the spring sun is shining, great sheets of the melting snowfields above, like mirrors, reflect the dazzling light. Backwards and upwards retreats the snowline, exposing first the fringe and then the masses of piled up moraine, which fill the upper end of each tributary valley.

In the autumn, much of the old snow on the Pir Panjál range has gone. But the glaciers remain, grey and rounded, resting in the hollows between the peaks and ridges. These icefields are wonderful at this time of the year. In the early morning, before sunrise, all the moisture is locked up by frost. So keen is the cold, even in the first week of September, that the inside of one's tent sparkles with rime, and looks like the interior of a salt mine. Walking on the glaciers at this time is difficult, if the slope is more than 20°, as in many places the ice is perfectly smooth. Where the surface is honeycombed it is easier. Absolute silence reigns. Not a sound is to be heard at this early hour. But having done our climb, on the return journey there is a vast change.

In the early morning, the sun rose in a cloudless sky. But now, fleecy clouds have gathered and

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they tend to drift across the higher peaks. The sunshine is hot. The silent glacier of the forenoon has become alive with sound and motion. Everywhere is the roaring sound of water. Torrents are pouring down the icy slopes. The whole surface is not only wet, but it is glittering with the movement of water. Miniature avalanches occur ever and anon on the steeper faces. Falling stones are of frequent occurrence.

All the streams are swollen and laden with débris. These diurnal variations are at their height during the month of September; for at that time there is still great sun heat during the day. As, however, there is frost at night, the range of temperature between day and night at these altitudes may exceed 100° F.

The view from any of the summits of the Pir Panjál range is most impressive. Stretched out below us is the whole length of the Vale of Kashmir, with the winding, glittering Jhelum river. So sinuous is this river, that some of its loops, three or four miles long, have necks which are less than a quarter of a mile across. From Vernag, its source, to the point where it leaves the valley below Baramula, the Jhelum is 122 miles long, although the distance by road is only 80 miles.



THE VALE OF KASHMIR

Kashmir is the country of Lombardy poplars & willows, of winding rivers, turquoise-coloured lakes & clear blue sky. This lovely valley is enclosed by a circle of snow-clad ranges & peaks.

CHAPTER III

A GREAT WATERWAY

FROM Baramula, the point at which the Jhelum Valley road enters the Valley of Kashmir, to Srinagar, is a distance of 33 miles. The road runs most of the way through a long aisle of poplar trees. But it is a pleasant change to leave the car and travel by boat. The boatmen are rather of the Semitic type. They are darker skinned than the town dwellers. Voluble, versatile and obliging, they would be quite admirable if they were as honest and truthful as they are efficient. For they will arrange most of your domestic concerns. One will cook, another wait at table and others do odd jobs.

Kashmiris have an absolute craving for testimonials. Some of them have books of these, which they treasure, much as we might an album of famous autographs. The certificates are not always good. Some of them are couched in terms, the ambiguity of which may be hidden from the possessor. "Mahammadhu cooks well, including his accounts," "Kadra has done me well," "Sadiqa, to my regret, is leaving on account of ill health—my ill health," and so on.

It is well to understand at once, that, although the Kashmiri boatmen, and indeed most Kashmiri servants, have many excellent traits, they regard

A Great Waterway

you as their opponents in a game in which you, quite naturally, are aiming at getting as much work out of them as possible and they, with equal reason, are striving to make as much profit as they can. Unfortunately, owing to defects in his up-bringing, the Kashmiri boatman does not discriminate with any nicety between fair means and foul, and toll is taken on most of your requirements, and sometimes on your personal effects. Withal he is a sententious person and, like most Moslems, he assumes a certain air of piety. He retails many yarns, some of them highly imaginative. The following conversation quoted by Edmund Candler is typical. As he was being paddled along, they came upon three legendary stones, two in the channel, one-half covered by willows in a ditch. "Rasula told us that these were once bad men, who had been petrified for some wickedness. One is a matting maker who spoke false words; another a Goojar (dairyman) who put water in the milk; another a Dhobie (washerman) who stole a silken robe, or as others say, a Bunniah (shopkeeper) who dealt crookedly.

" 'As to-day,' I said.

" 'Yes, Sahib, as to-day,' the boatmen echoed sorrowfully.

" 'What a stone heap the land would be if such justice were meted out to-day.'

" 'Yes, Sahib, a veritable stone heap,' intones Stroke.

" 'Assuredly a heap of stones,' echoes Bow.

" 'Are not the people afraid?'

" 'But it was long ago.'

" 'Is not God as powerful now?'

" 'God knows,' intones Stroke.

A Great Waterway

“ ‘God is all knowing, but His ways are dark,’ echoes Bow.”

The Jhelum river at Baramula is nearly a hundred yards across. Half a mile below the town it becomes much narrower. Here the mountains hem it in and it becomes a series of rapids. These the boatmen sometimes shoot. This adventure is attended by a certain degree of excitement.

As long ago as the time of King Avantivarman in the ninth century A.D., a Kashmiri engineer, Suyya, in honour of whom the town Sopur (Suyya-pur) received its name, endeavoured with, it is said, some measure of success to excavate the river bed in this gorge. His object was to deepen the channel and thus more effectively drain the Valley. Similar attempts have been made of recent years. Powerful dredgers worked by electricity have been employed. Some improvement has been effected. But the bed of the river was found to be very rocky and the great expense was finally thought to be prohibitive.

The river will always be a source of anxiety. Three days' continuous heavy rain, in the summer, results in an enormous influx of water into the basin-like valley. All the tributaries become raging torrents. Even small streams and water courses, ordinarily dry, turn into swollen turbid rivers. The Jhelum rises with extraordinary rapidity. It may reach twenty or even thirty feet above its ordinary level. As vast areas are protected by dykes and as, every year, the bed of the river rises owing to the continual deposit of silt, Kashmir, at these times, approximates in character to the valley of the Yang-tse, in China, so much of which lies below the level of the great river, which has

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been trained between embankments for many centuries.

Minor floods are of almost annual occurrence. A high river overlaps or bursts some dyke which is low or in bad repair. Considerable areas of cultivated land at once go under water. A really large flood is a disaster of the first magnitude. Bridges are swept away. The water rises steadily and pours over the lofty embankments which protect towns and villages. The people flee, carrying with them their household effects. Hundreds of square miles become submerged and form a vast lake. Everywhere the sound of rushing water is heard. Ever and anon there is the crash of a falling house. The walls, many of which are of sun-dried bricks, melt like sugar. Houses, gardens, sheds, stables, palings, all are swept down and involved in common ruin. Lives are lost; provisions become scarce; and in the cities there may be, strange to say, a water famine as the waterpipes may be wrecked. Everywhere there are boats, actively engaged in the work of rescuing parties of stranded villagers, and the salvage of property. Masses of wreckage are swept along. Care is needed to avoid entanglement in the branches of submerged fruit trees or contact with live electric wires.

We now understand why the smooth slow stream has artificially raised banks. For the water which is only 10 feet deep and flowing smoothly at the rate of two or three miles an hour, may at times assume a very different aspect. The river is navigable as far as Anant Nág (Islamabad). Baramula is a town of about a thousand houses, picturesquely grouped round the foot of the mountains which



KASHMIRI MOSLEM WOMEN

At the water's edge they fill their globular, shiny red water-pots & wash their cooking vessels. The smock-like garment worn is called a pheran. On their wrists are bangies & all are particular about wearing a cotton shawl (putz) over head & shoulders.

A Great Waterway

here shut in the valley. We embark. The boats of Kashmir are flat bottomed, with pointed bows and sterns projecting over the water. They are of very small draught, for in the lakes, the weeds, and in the river, the shallows, would greatly restrict the utility of any boat with a keel. The little "shikara" is like a long flat-bottomed canoe. This, which is the lightest craft on the river, can be rapidly paddled about by one or two boatmen, and is used for fishing, shooting and light loads of market garden produce. A superior type, with light roof of matting, or cotton awning is much used by passengers. With a crew of four, it is, for short trips, one of the pleasantest modes of progression.

For longer journeys, the "doonga" is the boat which is commonly used. This is 50 to 70 feet in length, and at the centre it is from 6 to 10 feet wide. It is roofed and walled with reed matting or boards. The passengers occupy the front half and the crew—this being the owner, his wife and family—live aft. Cooking is done in clay fireplaces. There is a very large floating population of this kind—between 40,000 and 50,000. River transport is of course cheap. Small barges without roofs called "kochu" will carry about a ton. But there are also large cargo boats laden with bricks, lime, stone or timber. The extensive rice traffic employs large numbers of high-powered barges with great breadth of beam, a thatched roof and cabin aft. Sometimes, adding to the charm of the landscape, we see a large boat carrying an immense stack of hay or rushes.

Life on the river is very pleasant for a time. On either side, 20 or 30 yards away, are the sides, fringed with mauve iris in masses. Often one bank

A Great Waterway

is seen to be shelving down to the water's edge—the soft green turf being succeeded by shallows or actual sandbanks. Here the boatmen have to proceed warily, using their long punting poles. On the opposite side, the river perhaps has cut deeply into the bank, which is concave and presents a vertical surface of brown clay. Here the water is deep and the current strong. The water is in deep shade, broken only by a line of high light where earth and water meet. Toward the sun is a broad patch of dancing light, for there is a slight ripple from the play of the breeze. Here and there a fisherman may be seen adroitly casting his circular net. Beyond are the grass-covered roofs of a hamlet, a grove of mulberry trees, and then the mountain wall, no details of which can be seen—only a light grey distance, except where snow slopes above reflect the light, like silver shields.

One of the delights of river life is the beauty of the reflections of cloud and sky, sunset and sunrise, of snowy range and orchards pink with rosy blossom. When the sun sets, the colour deepens to violet, and the outline of the range to the west reveals every ridge and peak and cleft, in sharp and dark contrast to the golden yellow and pale green sky.

The riverside villages are scenes of great animation. In the background are the houses, the prevailing colour of which, owing to the extensive use of timber, is a deep reddish brown. Here is a group eagerly bargaining for the golden heaps of unhusked rice exposed to view in an ancient barge. On the banks in front of their houses, the women ply their spinning wheels or, with pestles over 4 feet long, pound rice in large wooden mortars. Others fill

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their globular shining wet red water-pots at the village ghát. Here the footsteps of their ancestors have, for many generations, trodden deeply-worn hollows down the side of the bank to the water's edge. Herds of small black cattle are being driven down to drink. Some of them, standing in the shallows, slaking their thirst or pausing to ruminate, give the needed foreground to some exquisite piece of landscape.

All along the side of the river runs a tow path. Often, for miles at a time, two or three of the crew harness themselves to a considerable length of stout cord attached to the bows and pull steadily up stream while the boatwife steers with a large paddle.

After about 12 miles we reach Sopur, a town about the same size as Baramula. This is a good starting place for trips to the Lolab, Nágmarg and Gulmarg. The alluvial plain is now very wide and much of it is marshy. Here there is an extensive sheet of water, the Wular Lake. This is the largest fresh water lake in India. Sopur is a bracing healthy place, as fresh cool breezes are prevalent. The river here is broad as it emerges from the lake. All around are immense areas under irrigation for rice cultivation, or sown with maize. Tilling the ground at this place is highly speculative. Tens of thousands of acres are often devastated by floods. Any mounds or rising ground a few feet above flood level are utilized for the villages of these alluvial flats. They are made conspicuous by groves of willows and poplars and a few outstanding chenar trees.

The lake is so liable to sudden storms, and the boats are so unseaworthy, that the boatmen wisely

A Great Waterway

insist on crossing only in the calm of the early morning (for it takes about five hours to reach the other side). The river, both below and above the lake, is a favourite resort for anglers. The mah-seer is a fish, not unlike the salmon, and it actually ascends the Indus and the Jhelum from the sea—a distance of 1,000 miles. Specimens have been caught in Kashmir weighing over 50 pounds.

Resuming our journey on the other side of the lake we obtain impressive views of Mt. Haramouk, with its rounded eastern summit, fenced round by mighty precipices and joined by a jagged western arête. The whole mass stands up abruptly 12,000 feet above the level of the plain. Its reflection, on the surface of the water, is an exquisite mauve colour with streaks of pure white.

The river takes a great bend and progress seems slow until we pass the Sumbul bridge, and then 6 miles further on we reach Shádipur where, on the right bank, is the broad mouth of the Sind river. There is a large grove of chenars here and a rather attractive place for houseboats to moor. The name of this place, Shádipur, signifies the place of the marriages of the waters. On the wide stretch of plateau to the west, there are still to be seen the remains of King Lálátaditya's ancient capital, Pariasapura. The site is a particularly fine one.

Away on our left is the lofty mountain range which bounds the valley on the north-east. Mt. Haramouk we have already seen. We have also noticed the gap in the mountains, which marks the entrance of the great Sind river, the most important tributary of the Jhelum. Soon we see the snowy dome of the Kotwál mountain. This is about the height of the

A Great Waterway

Swiss Matterhorn. Before long, in the distance we observe two rocky hills, standing out. One of these, the Hari Parbat, crowned by the high walls of a fort, is isolated from the main range ; the other is the culminating peak of a rocky projecting ridge. It is known as the Takht-i-Suleiman (or, as the Hindus call it, Shankarachára). The ancient temple on the summit is conspicuous from afar. At night it is illuminated by electric lamps, the gift of the Maharajah of Mysore. These two landmarks reveal the position of the city of Srinagar. Owing to the winding of the river, sometimes we see them on one side, sometimes on the other, and occasionally they seem to be actually behind. But as we proceed they become increasingly distinct and we realise that at last we are approaching the capital of Kashmir.

CHAPTER IV

THE CITY OF SEVEN BRIDGES

IN the city of Srinagar, beauty and squalor are strangely mingled. A well-known writer speaks of "life and death jostling each other; children that swarm in prolific houses, while cholera and disease slay without pity; houses that grow into beautiful forms and delicate traceries as by the light of nature, yet are so shaken and awry with neglect, that one marvels how they escape instant dissolution; gardens laden with roses and filled with the scent of lilacs and jasmines, overhanging dark waters, whose breath is the breath of a sewer."

Srinagar is indeed one of the picturesque cities of the world. Every turn reveals such scenes as the artist loves to depict. The narrow tortuous lanes with overhanging balconies, supported by cedar pillars or richly decorated brackets, are, however, distinctly mediaeval in their sanitation. The courtyards, framed by exquisite lattice work and entered by ornate gateways with elaborately carved gateposts and architraves, are artistically attractive, but the air is not fragrant. We have here a population of over 140,000, living in a huddle of densely crowded tenements, which seem to have grown by a process of budding. As the family has increased, a small house has been built on to the parental abode. As necessity has arisen, further and similar additions

The City of Seven Bridges

have been made, all on the same limited site. Additional space has been gained by extending rooms on projecting beams over the street.

From a health standpoint the river is the salvation of Srinagar. It is a great broad, airy, central highway. There is some slight resemblance to the Grand Canal at Venice. The width is about the same. On either side the houses, many of them ornate, with balconies and variously designed lattice work, the bright sunshine and blue skies, the numerous small craft passing to and fro, some of them paddled by a gaily attired crew—all help to support the rather ambitious title sometimes given to Srinagar—the Venice of the East.

As the river passes right through the centre of the city, bridges are a necessity, and there are no less than seven. They are interesting structures and peculiar to Srinagar. Built entirely of wood, resting on foundations of stone with piles driven in around, they consist of immense beams, the trunks of unusually lofty cedars. These rest on the piers, which are built of deodar logs arranged in a square with the ends overlapping. The whole structure is cleverly cantilevered, the piers being corbelled out to lessen each span, and the ends of the bridge being tied down with alternate courses of wood and stone.

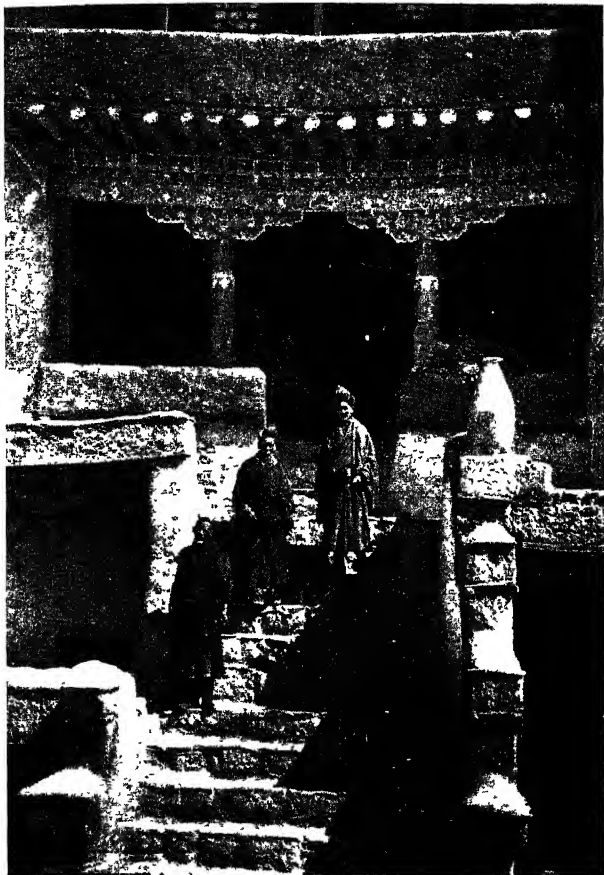
As we approach the city by water, we see, on our left, rising from the water's edge, the simple form of a stately Hindu temple. Its lofty conical roof is covered with silvery plates of shining metal, surmounted by a graceful gilded pinnacle. Close by, a gang of coolies is unshipping a cargo to the accompaniment of an antiphonal chant. Up and down

The City of Seven Bridges

the river, boats are constantly plying. Many of these are small, and, paddled by a crew of four smart men, they dash along with their one or two passengers. Occasionally we may see some notable person, in a long boat with a central platform and red or gilded canopy. A numerous and brightly attired crew, all paddle in good time—a pretty sight and in keeping with the surroundings.

Presently an omnibus boat passes us, laden with passengers and deep in the water; or a large house-boat, which might have come from the Thames, with curtained windows and upper deck, comes steadily down stream, carefully steered by men with large paddles and long punting poles. Many of the houses which line the bank are built on stone foundations, amongst which are numerous carved fragments from demolished temples. In places these walls are pierced by doorways opening at the water's edge. Above are balconies built out and resting on wooden pillars or brackets.

Some of the houses have windows of lattice work made of slips of cedar wood beautifully pieced together. Here and there, between the houses, are alleys or lanes leading by broad flights of rough stone steps down to the river. Here there are often scenes which Alma Tadema would have loved to depict. Women may be seen scouring their brass cooking pots or filling large red globular earthen water-pots and carrying them off on their heads. The Hindu women are particularly picturesque as they wear bright coloured garments—red, orange, violet, or green. Everywhere there are signs of activity. The washerman yonder is vigorously swinging the clothes over his head, and



ENTRANCE TO A LADAKHI MONASTERY

The monks wear red caps & toga-like robes. They often carry little prayer cylinders, which they twirl round & round. In the verandah are large wall paintings of the Chinese Janitor Demons.

The City of Seven Bridges

then down on to a stone. No wonder signs of wear and tear soon appear !

The banks in many places are lined with great barge-like river craft, laden with stones, earth, hay, and rice, and many another cargo. Where there is space on the sandy shore, lines of logs are moored and sawyers are busily at work with their double hand-saw. One man crouches beneath and the other stands on the beam, which is tilted up at a fairly wide angle and rests on a frame. All around is the din of voices, for Kashmiris cannot work without making a noise. Some, too, are quarrelsome. The boatwomen, if aroused, are sometimes spiteful and vindictive. They will hurl abuse and vituperation at each other until they are hoarse with screaming. A quarrel may then be deliberately adjourned until the next day. The procedure is to invert a rice basket ostentatiously. The next day when it is turned up the quarrel is again started with zest and worked up to the uttermost pitch of intensity, only dying out when both sides become voiceless.

The chief streets in Srinagar run parallel with the river on both sides, and during the daytime they are thronged with pedestrians. On either side of the road there is a deep gutter. Five feet above this are the open shop windows, with stalls and shelves one above another. Of the city population, more than a half are provision sellers or artificers. The wool industry alone employs well over 25,000. We pass a line of bakers' shops, with rows of wheaten and maize cakes and large flat chapatties, like the unleavened bread of the Jews. Here is a row of stalls with brass pots and pans and cooking vessels ;

The City of Seven Bridges

a little further on, the ear is assailed by the deafening clang of copper workers' shops, where large sauce-pans and boilers of all sorts are being hammered into shape.

In some shops the contents are very varied. There may be piles of cotton cloth ; for the Indian political boycott of British textiles has not affected Kashmir. In the same shop we see bottles of ghee, blocks of rock salt, baskets of maize, rice, lentils, flour, walnuts and sacks of turmeric. In others there are rows of red pottery, lines of native shoes, saddlery, embroidery, large iron pans full of boiling syrup and round slabs of sugar in little heaps. And there are, of course, the shops most attractive to Europeans, where tables, boxes, trays and frames of beautifully carved walnut wood are exposed ; papier maché articles with charming designs cleverly painted, extremely pretty embroidered curtains, table cloths, etc., carpets with a world-wide reputation, silver plate of special Kashmiri design, and jewellery—all can be purchased here. If we are not consenting victims to extortionate prices, the rates are really very moderate.

As we continue our journey up stream, we see on our left, one of the most striking objects in the city, the Shah-i-Hamadán Mosque. This ranks after Hazrat Bal as the most sacred Mahammedan building in Kashmir. It is a massive square building, chiefly of timber, with carved eaves and balconies and tiers of grass and flower-covered roof, and a very graceful central steeple, carrying on its point a glittering crescent and golden ball. The spire, at the base of which are four gables, rises from a square tower. Toward the end of the fourteenth

The City of Seven Bridges

century, Mir Sayad Ali of Hamadán was a power to be reckoned with. Those were the days of the Moslem Sultans and there was much forcible conversion of Hindus to Islam. In this he took an active part. His successor, Mahammed Khan Hamadáni, was even more zealous, and he was associated with Sikander the Iconoclast in the great persecution which for a time almost stamped out Hinduism. The Shah-i-Hamadán Mosque is therefore of very special interest as a memorial of those days. Another interesting mosque is the Patthar Masjid. This is on the opposite side of the river, rather lower down. As its name indicates it was constructed entirely of stone. But its chief interest is that it was erected by Queen Nur Mahal. It is said that having been built by a woman, it was never used for worship. For many years it has been employed as a granary.

If we disembark and walk through the city, ever and anon we pass a Moslem shrine, with an encircling wall, an ornate gateway and a central building with latticed windows. With regard to one of these there is a curious legend which is current amongst the followers of the heretical Qádiani sect. They allege that an ancient grave, not far from the Dast Gir Mosque, which the Kashmiris say is the tomb of Yuz-asaf, a Moslem saint who died in the fifteenth century, is really the sepulchre of Christ. They assert that He did not die on the cross but escaped from the Holy Land to Kashmir.

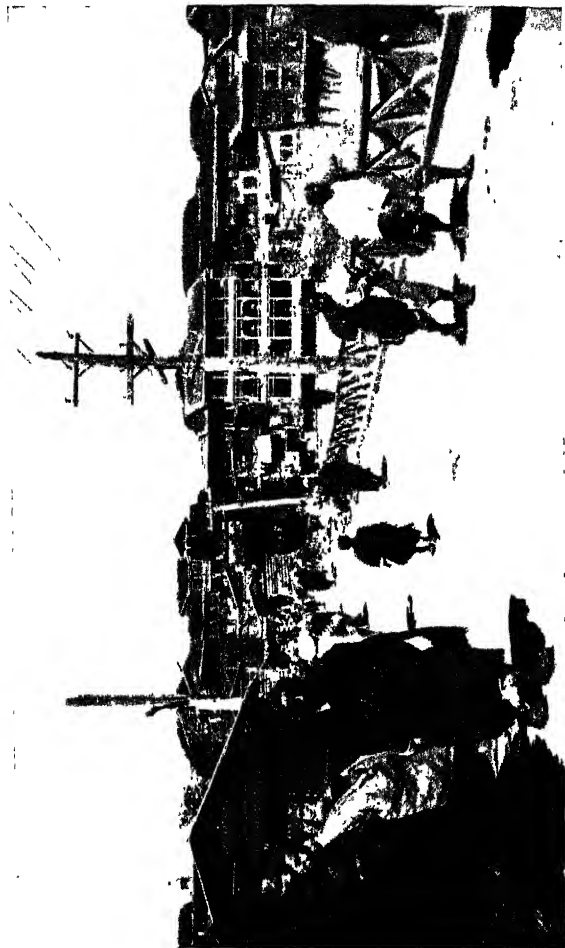
Pursuing our way in the bazaar, we notice the number of Hindus with their foreheads and ears painted with red and yellow caste marks. They wear rather small turbans of narrow cloth with

The City of Seven Bridges

the tuck on the right. Dress regulations are as rigid as in an English public school. Their sleeves must be narrow, their trousers tight and the gown, or pheran as it is called, must be fastened on the left. Pardah is not strict in Kashmir and we pass several women, both Mahammedan and Hindu. The Panditani (Hindu woman) is fond of brilliantly coloured garments. Red, orange, violet and saffron are favourite colours. Her cap and head-dress are white and she wears sandals of plaited grass. Hindu women are fairer than Mahammedans. They often have refined faces and gentle manners. Polygamy, although permitted, is comparatively rare. This is due to the relatively small number of women. For they are in the minority. There are about eight women to every ten men. This is partly owing to the fact that less care is exercised in bringing up female children. They are married at an early age. Many become widows before they are ten years old and they are not allowed to re-marry. Young Hindu widows are exposed to special dangers to character and often lead unhappy lives. Widowers may remarry and usually do so. . .

The Hindu's whole life, from the hour of his birth until the day when he dies and his son sets fire to his funeral pyre, is regulated by an elaborate code of religious rites, ceremonies and customs. These involve daily worship, with ablutions and offerings to idols of flowers and food. Frequent fasts are observed and there are a large number of holy days.

Here and there we pass a Sikh. The existence of this religion dates back to, at least, the sixteenth century. The number of Sikhs was greatly increased both in the time of the Pathán rulers and also when



IN THE HEART OF SRINAGAR

One of the bridges crossing the Jhelum This shows well the arched verandahs overlooking the river, & the dress of ordinary pedestrians who usually carry a Kashmiri blanket over their shoulders.

The City of Seven Bridges

Ranjit Singh's force invaded Kashmir. The community is, however, still quite small. There are numbers of school children in the streets, carrying black wooden boards instead of slates. Most of them are Hindus. The Mahammedans are less eager for education, and as a class they are very illiterate. All the boatmen, masons, carpenters, shoemakers, potters and coolies are Mussulmans; for Hindus, owing to religious scruples, will not engage in handicrafts. But they compete vigorously in trade, both as merchants and shopkeepers. Most of the Kashmiri Hindus are Bráhmans, and they are usually called Pandits. Their intellectual superiority over the rest of the population must be admitted. They are quick of apprehension and have extraordinarily good memories. Many are clerks in Government offices or subordinate officials in State employ. Although many are venal and timid in opposing corruption, there are some who are honest, clear-headed, industrious and trustworthy.

There are very few important public buildings in Kashmir. The old palace, known as the Sher Garhi, is an extensive building, with an imposing façade rising from the water's edge and having a pretty little temple with a gilded roof. The style of architecture is, however, somewhat mixed. Still, the coloured balconies and painted mouldings, with white walls and gold ornamentation, all blend at a distance. With the blue waters of the river and the light grey of the mountains a harmony of colour is thus presented very much like some of the scenes Turner loved to depict. In the palace there are some handsome durbar halls with highly decorated ceilings. On the opposite side of the river is a broad

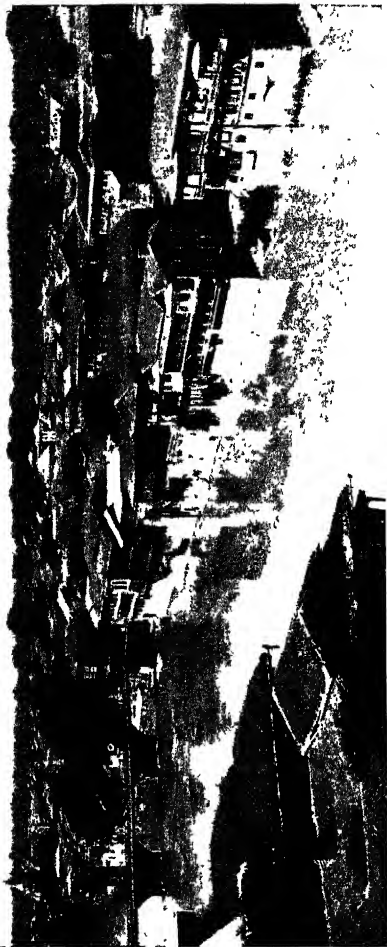
The City of Seven Bridges

flight of steps leading up to the Basant Bagh. In olden days the river was here spanned by a rope, to which petitions could be attached and hauled up by the palace officials for presentation to the Maharajah.

Above the first bridge, on the left bank of the river, is the State Hospital. This is excellently equipped, in very good order, and it is becoming increasingly useful. The court of Justice on the opposite bank is not an imposing building. The houses of the bankers, shawl merchants, silversmiths, embroiderers and other merchants are further down the river. The shawl trade for which Kashmir used to be specially famous has almost entirely ceased. It was greatly dependent upon a French demand, which suddenly came to an end after the Franco-German war of 1870-71. Its place has, to a large extent, been taken by carpets in which there is now a flourishing trade.

The Kashmir silk factory is perhaps the largest in the world, and well worth a visit. There is a very large output, which is exported and sold as yarn in Europe, sometimes reaching a shilling an ounce. The introduction of synthetic silk has, however, seriously affected this important industry.

On the north side Srinagar is dominated by a hill known as the Hari Parbat. Round the top are the lofty battlements of a fort constructed by the Pathán, Atta Mahámmad Khan, in the eighteenth century. High up on the south side are the picturesque galleries and spires of the famous Hazrat Makdum Sahib shrine. The slopes below are covered with almond trees. In the spring when these are in blossom the scene is most attractive.



SRINAGAR CITY

With ever the background of snowy peaks, & constant sunshine & with its broad river & numerous canals, Srinagar has sometimes been called the City of the Sun & sometimes the Venice of the East

The City of Seven Bridges

Round the foot of the hill, a girdle of 3 miles, is the high bastioned wall, constructed by the first of the Moghuls, who selected this as the site of his city Nagar.

This wall is pierced by fine old gateways with saracenic arches flanked by towers. Over that which pierces the southern wall is an inscription in Persian, "The fort of Nagar was built by order of the just king Akbar Shah, the chief king of all the kings in the world, high is his honour (God is the greatest). No king in the world has been like him and there will not be another. He sent one crore and ten lakhs of rupees from his treasury. Two hundred preceptors of India were his servants. The building of the fort of Nagar Nagar is made by the command of God, and by the orders of His Highness Akbar Shah, the shade of God. It was completed by the labour of Kwaja Hasan, the contemptible servant of the servants of Akbar Shah in the forty-fourth year of his reign and the year 1006 after the prophet Mahammed."

On the south-west side of the Hari Parbat, and between it and the fourth bridge is the great Jamma Masjid, the Moslem cathedral. It holds thousands of worshippers. The cloisters, a hundred yards long, are supported by pillars of cedar and enclose a pleasant square of green turf shaded by trees.

To the east, on the outskirts of Srinagar there is the Takht-i-Suleiman, a rugged hill of pyramidal shape the summit of which is crowned by an ancient temple, 1,000 feet above the valley level. This is an ideal place for a view. At our feet lies the city with the valley stretching away beyond, as far as eye can reach. The winding course of the river

The City of Seven Bridges

can be traced until it is lost in distant haze. The old palace, the glittering pinnacles of many temples, the spires of mosques, and a huddle of grass-covered roofs show through the light blue haze of mist and smoke which hovers over the city. All around are orchards and gardens extending up to the marshy shores of the Dal Lake. The very large area of swampy and submerged ground around Srinagar is always notable. On the slopes to the east we notice an extensive group of buildings. This is the new palace—which is in a very commanding position. To the west and stretching away towards Baramula is the long aisle of poplars which marks the course of the Jhelum valley road, the route to India. Beyond the Hari Parbat is the shallow Anchar Lake. Opposite to us, looking nearer than its actual distance, is the extended line of the Pir Panjál snows, sometimes clear and white against a blue sky, but more often partly hidden by piled up masses or columns of cumulus, or in the spring and summer, by dark masses of storm-driven cloud which circle round the valley to the sound of the distant roar of thunder.

To the south of the Takht and almost at our feet is the European settlement, the church of All Saints with its high pitched roof and graceful steeple, the club, tennis courts, beautiful green polo ground, and golf links. Dotted along the roads are houses of guests of His Highness the Maharajah, and of officials. Conspicuous among these is the Residency with its charming garden. Nestling quite close up against the Takht are the extensive buildings of the Mission Hospital of the Church Missionary Society and St. Luke's Church. These are most picturesque with

The City of Seven Bridges

their towers, broad verandahs, red roofs and gables extending for some hundreds of yards along the northern slope of a grassy spur which used to be crowned by an old fort, and is known as the Rustum Gaddi. The hospital has 150 beds and the daily attendance of out-patients sometimes exceeds 300. The annual number of surgical operations is over 5,000.

Srinagar, although most interesting and attractive for the artist, is not a sanatorium. Indeed some of the most beautiful places are associated with the most unpleasant odours. Perhaps it is best seen from a boat, although, even there, the air is sometimes tainted. This is perhaps especially the case in the Mar canal which, with its overhanging buildings and rich tones of brown or light red in the woodwork, its quaint old bridges and irregular gháts is well worth a visit. Here, also, there is quite a suggestion of Venice.

Srinagar has at least this claim to the title "City of the Sun," for the greater part of the year, owing to the beautiful climate of Kashmir, this most interesting old town is bathed in sunshine.

CHAPTER V

A DAY ON A RIDGE

And soft sunshine and the sound
Of old forests echoing round
And the light and smell divine
Of all flowers that breathe and shine

SHELLEY.

JULY is the hottest month in the Valley of Kashmir. The heat, although not rivalling that of the Plains, is distinctly unpleasant. This is largely due to the amount of moisture in the atmosphere and the refraction of the heat, in the case of Srinagar, from the bare rocky slopes of the Takht-i-Suleiman.

There are places, however, quite near, where it is always cool and where the scenery is exquisite—as fine indeed as any in the world, and an extraordinary contrast to the countless tenements and crowded lanes of the great city. Fifteen miles, as the crow flies, to the north-east of Srinagar, there is a commanding ridge, which separates the Vale of Kashmir from the Sind Valley. The height of this ridge, above the valley below, varies from 3,000 to 5,000 feet. The top is very narrow in places, with sharp jagged trap rocks of the Pir Panjál series, cropping out in long lines, with here and there blocks of quartz and schists.

The side toward Srinagar is grass covered and

A Day on a Ridge

dotted with blue pines. The Sind Valley side is covered by a dense forest of pines and Himalayan spruce. In places the crest of the ridge broadens out into a flowery alp. Delightful spots may be found for a camp; and a walk along this ridge is indescribably charming. 5,000 feet down below spreads the whole valley of Kashmir, partly veiled by soft blue atmosphere. The Takht looks small, but the temple which crowns it is quite visible. The Hari Parbat hill with the fort, the palace, and the densely-populated city, all lie almost at our feet. The Dal Lake, a sheet of blue, with its bays, peninsulas, reed-girt shores and islands, the Moghul gardens, the Nasim Bagh with its mass of chenars, the terraced Nishát and Shalimar lie at our feet. The winding river and the dark line of poplars, indicating the course of the Jhelum Valley Road, the immense stretches of marsh and jheel, and of vivid green rice fields, are stretched out beneath us like a map. Behind all, is the far-flung line of the Pir Punjál Range with its cataract of fleecy clouds pouring over and heralding the near approach of the monsoon. Masses of cumulus, too, are drifting across the valley and as they come into contact with our ridge, thin walls of mist race up the slopes.

On the other side, looking over the fir forest, Mt. Kotwal (14,210 feet), with its rugged northern peak and massive shoulders and its valleys filled with deep violet shadow, looks barely more than a rifle shot away. Further to the left is Mt. Haramouk (16,900 feet), about 10 miles distant in a bee line. This beautiful mountain towers up, with tiers of cliffs on its eastern and southern face dropping as sheer precipices into the blue waters of Lake Gangabál.

A Day on a Ridge

4,000 feet below us is the fertile Sind Valley with its foaming torrent, the roar of which can be heard even at this distance. The terraced fields of maize are dotted with tiny squares, which catch the light. These are the roofs of the cultivators' houses. Looking to the north we see, on either side, range beyond range of grey serrated peaks, their upland valleys occupied by flowery meadows, and their slopes covered by birches, straggling above, but denser below, where they mingle with, and are soon replaced by, the dark brownish-green spruce forest. In the distance we see the sombre entrance of the gorge which leads to Sonamarg.

Nothing can be more fascinating than this ridge. Soaring overhead is a magnificent golden eagle. As we traverse a little path on the rocky face of the mountain, we disturb two Monal pheasants—the most beautiful of all Himalayan birds. As, with a whirr, they shoot down to the forest beneath, we catch a glimpse of their wonderful blue and green and golden plumage glistening in the sunshine. The ground is sprinkled with wild strawberry plants, with ripe fruit in abundance. Exquisite red roses abound and form patches of brilliant colour on the hillside. Here we pass a privet bush in full blossom. Further on, the slopes are covered with the cream-coloured flowers of the *Spirea canescens*.

As we ascend we make our way through thickets of pink rhododendron. Higher up we emerge on close, springy, tufted turf, the knolls of which are clothed with wild thyme. The air is fragrant with the scent of countless herbs. Then we come to charming patches of the dwarf *Rhododendron anthropogon*. Clumps of *Phlomis spectabilis* (like

A Day on a Ridge

a pink dead nettle), contribute to the rich colour of the floral carpet. The forget-me-nots form delightful masses of pale blue. Still more impressive is the glorious blue of other varieties of the borage order which occur in sheets. Here the air vibrates with the humming of numerous honey bees, which are particularly attracted to these flowers and have come a great distance—the nearest hives being at least three miles away. Further on, the ground is starred with edelweiss and silvery everlasting. Large potentillas, gracefully poised, turn their lovely golden faces towards the sun. The flora is wonderfully like that in Switzerland. A little brown bird, Hodgson's pipit, springs from close to our feet. On looking closely we find a charming little nest with four dark brown eggs.

Among the masses of rock the saxifrage grows luxuriantly and there are masses of ferns. Here, too, may be seen a large campanula, with graceful hanging bells, and cushions of the prim little *androsace primuloides* with its dainty silvery rosetted leaves. Here, too, as we ascend, we find specimens of the famous blue poppy, which is, however, not yet generally in blossom. As we walk up the crest, a deliciously cool breeze blows in fitful puffs. The masses of cumulus cloud throw deep shadows, in patches, on the mountains. Still climbing upwards we leave almost all vegetation behind and scramble on immense rocks. And then we enter the clouds. Everything is blotted out from view. There is a cold feeling in the air. The light is greatly reduced and an absolute stillness falls on all around. We watch the edges of the cloud scurrying up the slopes, as if afraid that they might be left behind ; and then once

A Day on a Ridge

more we descend into sunshine and the briskly-moving fresh air, resonant with the songs of birds. Butterflies flit past—the fritillary and the tortoiseshell and big humble bees swing joyously around.

In the woods the exquisitely graceful cream-coloured columbine owes much to the contrast afforded by the dark forest background. On the sunny slopes the pale yellow spikes, 18 inches high, of the *Morina longifolia*, with its sharp prickly leaves, form brilliant points of light. In warm corners Royle's rich orange-coloured dwarf sunflower is just beginning to bloom. The call of the cuckoo comes softly down the wind.

Every sense is soothed and charmed. Nowhere does the scenery afford more marked contrasts; nowhere is there a greater wealth of wild flowers.

CHAPTER VI

VILLAGE LIFE

THE foundation of life and prosperity in Kashmir is laid upon rice. Rice is the staple food. Without it the population would starve. The densely-inhabited city of Srinagar, for its very life, requires reasonably cheap rice. So the peasantry are the really important element in Kashmir. The prosperity of Kashmir depends absolutely upon its agriculturists, of whom there are more than a million. Looking down on the valley, from a height, we see hundreds of square miles of rice fields in terraced squares and crescents. During the spring and summer these are all under water, being irrigated from small channels. These channels are supplied by canals taken off from the nearest river. As the water supply is derived from the snows, the rice crop does not require rain. Its cultivation entails enormous labour. First of all the fields have to be constructed in terraces so as to allow of effective irrigation. Channels have to be dug for the distribution of the water. It is essential, when the rice has been sown, or planted out from the nurseries, that the soil should not dry again. The weeding alone is a tremendous task. Rows of peasants may be seen, standing in mud and water, bent down, scooping out all the adventitious plants and grasses and plastering mud round the stalks of

Village Life

the young rice plants. This goes on day by day under a hot sun ; for the fields have to be completely weeded no less than four times a year. Rice ripens up to an altitude of about 7,000 feet, or even higher in sunny situations. But on the slopes around the valley, maize and wheat are extensively grown, and, higher up, buckwheat and barley are the staple food of the scanty population. Even in the valley there are alluvial flats some scores of feet above the level of the plain, which cannot be irrigated and on which Spring crops of wheat, linseed, etc., are raised.

Kashmiri villages are conspicuous in the landscape. There is usually a group of chenar trees, with light grey trunks and massive curved limbs, mottled with pale yellow. The dense foliage forms dark green masses in summer and brilliant splashes of light red in the late autumn. Close by are two or three lofty poplars and lines of young saplings bordering orchards of pear, apple and apricot or market gardens enclosed by wattle fences. Mounds covered with large purple or white irises, brilliant and fragrant in the sunshine, mark the sites of the old village graveyards. The hamlet itself shows as a collection of large high-pitched, straw-thatched gables of a deep reddish brown colour, peeping out from among the mulberry trees. Often the sides of the houses are festooned with bright rows of red chillies, golden maize cobs, or strings of split turnips or apple rings.

Perhaps the lumbardar or village headman comes forward to meet us. He is usually an elderly man, often rather tall, his beard dyed red with henna, so as to be like that ascribed by tradition to Mahammed. His upper lip is bared by a closely cropped mous-

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tache. On his shaven head is a large and rather dirty white turban. He is wearing the usual Kashmiri garment, a long tunic or pheran of puttoo (Kashmiri woollen cloth), wide baggy cotton trousers, bare legs and feet with stout pointed shoes.

In the courtyard behind him we see two women busily engaged in pounding the unhusked rice in a large wooden mortar with pestles 5 feet long. First one straightens herself, lifts the pestle as high as she can, and then bending, suddenly brings it down with a crash ; then the other woman facing her does the same. This is perhaps one of the commonest sights in the village. A little farther on we notice a row of upright sticks at intervals of 2 feet on a stretch of green. One of the villagers may be seen walking up and down, rapidly winding from a spindle, a thread of cotton in and out of these stakes. This is a primitive method of weaving. In a verandah close by, an old woman is seated with masses of snow-white cotton wool in front of her. From this, with the aid of a curious old wheel, she is spinning excellent thread. A peep through the window of another house shows a rough loom in which woollen blankets are woven. This is one of the staple village industries. A common arrangement is for the local shopkeeper to advance money on the promise of repayment in blankets, garden produce or rice.

There seem to be numbers of children. They are often bright, pleasant and pretty, but usually hopelessly spoilt, due to the absence of discipline. Owing to the conditions of life they acquire in certain directions a remarkable gift of bearing responsibility and even of taking initiative action. A small

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child of only five years old, may, for instance, be seen driving an enormous buffalo along and thumping it with a big stick at intervals. Children cleverly round up sheep and goats. Early in the morning they take the herds and flocks up to the hills and drive them back at night. Often a very small child may be seen, lying on the grass by the side of a babbling brook, in entire charge of a scattered flock which is peacefully grazing around. The girls are great water carriers. Owing to hard work they soon lose their good looks. When quite young they wear small skullcaps and may have their hair beautifully done in a large number of plaits spread out over the back and gracefully braided together. After marriage, which takes place soon after ten, a thicker turban-like red cap, studded with pins, is worn. Over this a square of country cloth acts as a veil and covers the back. An ample pheran of dark blue cotton print with a red pattern stamped on it completes the costume. Or the gown may be of grey striped cotton or wool, with wide sleeves turned back and showing a bright-coloured lining. Round the neck many of the women wear a collar of brass or silver, enamelled in red or blue, or a coral and silver bead necklace. Large metal ear-rings are common. Glass bangles, or massive silver bracelets and finger rings, with agate or cornelian, complete the list of ordinary jewellery worn by Kashmiri women. The feet are bare, or leathern shoes, often green, are worn. The houses are without chimneys, so the inmates are apt to become smoke begrimed.

The villages of Kashmir are full of human interest, for here we can study the people in their natural



A FAMILY SCENE

A little girl with her hair in long plaits, two mothers with babies, & the grandmother spinning. The lattice window, the cow in the corner with reed matting roof & the dilapidated plaster disclosing sun-dried bricks are all typical.

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environment. As we enter we usually find a broad track with grassy borders bounded by a rippling stream. Grateful shade is cast by large walnut trees. The deeply fissured and gnarled trunks of these rise from spreading roots which encroach on the path. Some of these trees have a girth of 18 feet and more. The houses are mostly two storied and they have a framework of wood which is filled in with sun-dried or, in the better houses, with kiln-baked bricks. Under the thatched roofs is an airy space with stores of grass and firewood. Silkworms are often kept here; for mulberry trees are very numerous. The cocoons when ready are purchased by the silk factory. Thousands of villagers all over the Valley find this a profitable undertaking.

Most of the houses have a broad front verandah to the upper story. This is comfortable and airy, and in it the people live for the greater part of the year. At one end the cooking is done on a little fireplace made of clay. The inner rooms, chiefly used in winter, are dark and almost unventilated. In very many of the houses the lower storey is used as a cattle shed. No doubt this helps to keep the house warm in winter, but it is at some sacrifice of sweetness. Kashmir is infested with rats. So the grain is kept in small wooden buildings raised some feet above the ground. Nearly every village has its mosque. Some of these are very old with beautiful carved woodwork. At daybreak and at sunset, the voice of the "muezzin" sounds out, calling the faithful to prayer. The villagers are very strict in observing the *ramzan*—the month of fast, and in those days the mosques are well

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filled when the Imán conducts namáz. In the roof or verandah of the mosque there is usually a *memento mori* in the shape of a wooden bier in which the dead are carried to the graveyard to be interred without a coffin.

The ordinary villager is rather a wonderful person. He is perhaps not very ornamental. He may be dirty. His old skull-cap, grey, orange or red, is probably greasy. His cotton pheran looks like a nightgown with wide sleeves. Originally white this is now grey. Short, loose and voluminous cotton pyjamas, with bare legs shewing below and plaited sandals of rice straw complete his costume. But on his back he has a long, grey woollen Kashmiri blanket with the end thrown over his left shoulder. This man, however, is an athlete. He can carry a load weighing 100 lbs. for 5 or more miles and often carries 60 lbs. for a whole march of 6 kos (12 miles). They begin early. Little children may often be seen coming down from the forest, each carrying a load proportioned to his size. A little six year old child is carrying a bundle of sticks weighing at least 30 lbs. Behind him are two or three boys, perhaps eight or ten years old, each with faggots of wood from 40 to 60 lbs. in weight. In their daily life the villagers are in the habit of carrying heavy loads of grass and other field produce. Yet at first sight their physique is not impressive. They are spare. There is no great obvious development of muscle, certainly nothing of the "Sandow" type. But the muscle is there, hard and compact and able to perform these astonishing feats. The ordinary peasant is in many ways deft with his hands. He can twist



AN ANCIENT HANDICRAFT

In Kashmir most kitchen utensils, water-pots, basins, jugs, bowls & cups are made of red earthenware. Ordinary crockery is comparatively little used.

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saplings into tough withes for lashing together loose bundles. He can plait most serviceable grass sandals and prove himself an agricultural handyman in many directions. He is ordinarily of cheerful disposition. Often he will act as a porter and carry camp equipment for travellers. If during the day he grumbles at the weight of his load, the length of the road or the steepness of the hills, and if he suggests that the camping place may be cold and without shelter or firewood, he soon forgets his woes when the tents are pitched, fires lighted and his rice is cooking in a large earthenware pot from which a savoury smell issues. When he has eaten his fill, he often breaks out into song as he sits by the camp fire, and he may become conversational and confidential.

On the whole the people are good tempered and often merry. They have a real sense of humour and enjoy a joke. A typical instance of their grim humour is given by Sir Walter Lawrence when he was Settlement Commissioner. "One day," he writes, "while hearing a petition, I noticed an elderly Hindu villager standing on his head. He remained in that position for nearly half an hour, when I asked him his business. He then explained that his affairs were in so confused a state that he did not know whether he was standing on his head or his heels." Kashmiris have a strong dramatic instinct. If making a petition a common demonstration to indicate their sad condition is "a procession of two men and one woman. One of the men wears a shirt of matting; one carries a pan of embers on his head and the woman bears a number of broken earthen pots."

Village Life

In most villages there is a Moslem shrine, the tomb of some Mahammedan saint. Usually it is embowered in trees. Not unfrequently it is on an eminence. It may be a simple enclosure with a wall round and a central building with lattice work and a roof covered with tulips, crown imperial lilies, or purple irises, and adorned with a little wooden spire or an elaborate pinnacle made of red earthenware. The oldest shrines may be traced back to the fourteenth century. Quite a number have been placed on the sites of former Hindu sacred springs, and the worship has been continuous although changed in form. Devotion to, reverence for, and implicit trust in, the village shrine, play a much larger part in the religious life of the average Kashmiri peasant than any special regard for the Koran or its teaching. It is the shrine to which they look for protection from disease and disaster and to it they look for aid in times of stress or in any special enterprise. Gifts are brought to it by the villagers—fowls, rice, ghee and sometimes money. The custodians of the tombs are usually descendants of the holy man interred therein. They are called Pirs or Pirzadas and wield considerable influence. They will tell you that they are “sufed posh” (i.e., they wear white clothes and do no manual work). They can usually read. A common arrangement is for them to take turns in conducting the worship of the village mosque. Besides receiving the offerings of the faithful, they eke out a rather precarious livelihood by making and selling charms. These are worn by many of the villagers. They consist of a short verse of the Koran, or even an undecipherable scribble on a scrap of Kashmiri

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paper, folded up and stitched in a little piece of cloth or leather or even contained in a small copper case. This, which is one or two square inches in size, is suspended from the neck or tied round one of the arms. If there is disease of the foot or leg, the amulet may be found attached to the ankle or knee.

Kashmiris are called Pir-parast (saint worshippers), "No man will dare pass a shrine on horseback, and I once saw a striking example of the danger of neglecting this rule. A marriage party was crossing a stream, above which stood the shrine of a saint. All of them dismounted and passed over the bridge, but the father of the bridegroom with the bridegroom in his arms, rode boldly over. The bridge broke, and the horse, father and son were precipitated into the stream where they lay struggling. I ran up and rebuked the crowd for not assisting the sufferers, but they looked on gloomily and said the man richly deserved his fate. After some trouble I induced some of my own people to disentangle the men from the horse, and then one of the attendants of the shrine explained to me that within the last ten years four men who had despised the saint and had ridden over the bridge had been killed."¹

In the autumn, strings of camels may be seen. These have been brought up from India and will return laden with walnuts and fruit. Fragile bridges are not only found in the vicinity of shrines. On one occasion I saw a camel put its leg through one. It promptly fell and as it struggled was in imminent danger of breaking its back, if it fell over the edge,

¹ Lawrence : " Valley of Kashmir."

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or of a hopeless fracture of the leg, which had passed through the planking of the bridge up to the girth. Fortunately I had a coil of Alpine rope and by careful lashing and enlisting a lusty team of villagers we extricated the beast unhurt. The onlookers were so pleased and excited, that, unlike orientals, they gave a hearty cheer !



VILLAGE LIFE

To the right is a thatched cottage with an overhanging walnut tree & a spinning wheel in front.
On the left is a wooden granary & a youth grinding corn with a primitive hand-mill.

CHAPTER VII

STORIES OF THE PAST

THE contributions of Kashmir to our knowledge of prehistoric times are not so interesting as those of Europe, Rhodesia, or Java. No fossil remains of man or apes have been found. At the time when dinosaurs were roaming about in Mongolia and mammoths in northern Asia, Kashmir may have been under water. Recently, fairly extensive coal measures have been discovered in the outer hills. But in more remote times, before the growth of tropical forests, most of the country must have been covered by the sea. It is interesting to try and picture the conditions which then existed. High ranges and lofty peaks, some of them volcanic, may have formed chains of islands, the shores of which were whitened with surf and the cliffs of which re-echoed the roar of breakers. Even at a height of over 12,000 feet above sea level I have found fossiliferous limestone, crowded with small corals, crinoid stems and other marine forms.

After the lapse of an immense period of time the Valley of Kashmir was an enormous fresh water lake. For at a height of some hundreds of feet above the present level the black shells of the Singhára water chestnut are found in the clay together with many varieties of land and fresh-water shells, all apparently of living forms.

Stories of the Past

The Hindu has a vivid imagination and he is a great lover of wonders. So it is interesting to pass from the certainties of geology to the myths and quite charming fairy tales of Hinduism.

For instance one delightful story tells of the pleasure cruises of the Goddess Párwati, the consort of Siva, and how she used to sail about on the vast lake which covered the whole valley. Her mountain home was on Haramouk, a spot so sacred that no snakes are to be found in any place from which this mountain can be seen. Párwati used to sail right across a vast lake to Konsa Nág, at the extreme south end of the valley. In her honour this great sheet of water was called Satisar, the lake of the chaste lady.

More romantic and exciting is the story of Jalodbáva. This was an appalling demon, who, emerging from the lake, used to chase the people and devour men, women and children. Eventually the whole of the surrounding country became absolutely depopulated. Kashyápa, a grandson of Brahma, the first person of the Hindu Triad, in the course of a prolonged pilgrimage, visited Kashmir. He was greatly distressed to see the devastation and desolation of so beautiful a country. But he realized that the demon was powerful and that very special measures must be taken. So he devoted himself to religious exercises for 1,000 years! He also called to his aid the Hindu Trinity, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.

Jalodbáva then became very wary and constantly remained hidden under the water. It became evident that the only effective way to expose the monster was to empty the lake. Anánta, an

Stories of the Past

incarnation of Vishnu, was quite equal to the occasion. He struck the mountain range at Bara-mula and produced a rift. The waters of the lake rushed out. Jalodbáva, who had now become visible, at once raised a smoke screen and spread an inky darkness over the land. Vishnu, with great resource, to secure adequate illumination, took the sun in one hand and the moon in the other. But, even so, the demon managed to hide himself in a pool. Kashyápa now appealed to the Goddess Párwati. Seizing a portion of the Sumira mountain, she dropped it upon the monster and crushed him. The present Hari Parbat is said to be the scene of the final act of this tragedy and the hill is believed by Hindus to be the mountain mass under which the demon was buried and it is regarded as a most sacred spot.

After this great campaign, and the defeat of Jalodbáva, the smaller demons lost heart. Gradually the valley became again inhabited. But the winters were so rigorous that the people used to retreat to the drier and warmer regions of Kish-tiwar, leaving the demons in possession. One winter, however, an aged Brahman remained behind, taking up his quarters in a cave. He was promptly seized by the demons, carried off, and thrown into Nilnág, a lake with blue waters, about 20 miles from the scene of Jalodbáva's execution. The Brahman sank to the bottom. But, waking from his trance, he found that he was in a palace. In the midst was the king of the sprites sitting on his throne. So he sought audience of this monarch. First of all he laid a complaint before him of the rough treatment which he had experienced

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The king was most gracious and handed to him, for his guidance, a manuscript, the Nilamata Purána, enjoining him straitly to obey the precepts of that book and to make the offerings therein prescribed. He assured him that if he faithfully observed these injunctions the demons would cease to molest him. He was treated kindly but not allowed to leave until the spring when he was restored to dry land. He carried out his instructions and imparted them to others. As a result, the Hindus claim that, from that time, people were able to remain in Kashmir during the winter and the demons ceased to trouble them. Kashmir is supposed to have become permanently inhabited about the twentieth century before the Christian era. But we really know very little about those early ages when possibly aboriginal tribes dwelt on the shores of the great Kashmir lake or in the recesses of the dense forests.

Two and a half centuries before the Christian era, Asoka, the great Buddhist King of Northern India, also held sway over Kashmir, and Buddhism was then the national religion. Two miles to the east of Srinagar, on the slopes of the Zebanwan mountain and extending between the old temple of Pandretthan and the Aitgaji gap which overlooks the Dal lake, are the remains of extensive ruins of the ancient capital of Kashmir. This may have been originally founded by Asoka. Throughout the valley many stupas and temples were erected in his reign. The seductions of the Nága maidens are said to have been too much for his son Jalóka, who embraced their religion and reverted to the worship of Siva.

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Once more, however, about 40 A.D., the time when, in the west, our own isles were being invaded by the Romans, a revival of Buddhism took place in Kashmir. That religion reached its zenith in the reign of King Kanishka, an Indo-Scythian monarch of northern extraction. At this time the famous third great council of Buddhism was held. According to the Chinese pilgrim, Hwen Thseng, the proceedings of the synod, engraven on copper plates, were deposited in a stupa at Ushkpur, near Baramula. Buddhism gradually declined, and, it is recorded that by 680 A.D., the people were greatly addicted to Devas, and the monasteries were few and partly deserted. The Buddhists were then trekking eastward into Tibet and across the Chinese Empire.

Until the fourteenth century Kashmir was ruled by a succession of Hindu kings, some of whom, such as Lalatáditya (697-738 A.D.) and Avantivarman (855-883 A.D.), were able and successful administrators. Their names are perpetuated by the temples, canals and drainage works, the building or construction of which were undertaken in their reigns. The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were times of horror for Kashmir. Kashmiri clans, the descendants of which still exist in the valley, Dámaras, Pálas, Khashas, Tántris and Thakkurs, formed predatory bands and carried fire and sword throughout the country.

When the administration of a country is conspicuously weak it is always liable to internal revolution or invasion from without. Kashmir had become a country of drunkards, gamblers and profligate women. It was at this time that Zulzu, the dreaded

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Tartar chief, made a sudden descent upon Srinagar, set fire to the city, massacred most of the inhabitants, and carried off the rest as slaves. But he encountered a more formidable foe, in the early onset of the rigours of winter, with unusually heavy blizzards. Like Napoleon, he was forced by famine and cold to retreat. Unlike that great general he himself perished in the snow with the whole of his force and thousands of unhappy captives.

For nearly four and a half centuries Kashmir then came under Moslem rule. Sikander the Iconoclast is the best known of the Kashmir Sultans, for his reign was one of terror. It was marked by the demolition of many fine old Hindu temples and the massacre of thousands of Hindus. Zain-ul ab-ul-Din, who reigned for 52 years from 1417 A.D., was an excellent ruler and carried out many works of public utility.

It was, however, during the Moghul occupation that Kashmir really became prosperous and fertile. The Emperor Akhbar sustained one serious defeat before his troops were able to enter Srinagar. The most important battle was at the foot of the Takht-i-Suleiman; but even this was not decisive and much desultory skirmishing ensued before the Moghuls were finally victorious. They left their mark in Kashmir in various ways, as for instance, the great wall round the Hari Parbat and numerous gardens with chenar trees and fountains.

The gradual wane of the Moghul Empire left Kashmir the prey of tyrannical and oppressive local governors. The Afghan rule, which lasted from 1752-54, was one of brutality. The Hindus suffered most of all. The alternatives of conversion, death

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or flight were once again set before them. A poll tax was instituted. They were not allowed to wear shoes or turbans. Tied up two and two in grass sacks, many Hindus were thrown into the Dal Lake. In 1819, however, the pendulum swung in the opposite direction. Ranjit Singh, the Sikh Lion of the Panjab, conquered Kashmir. Now the Mussulmans began to suffer.

Moorcroft, referring to those days, wrote : " The Sikhs seem to look upon the Kashmerians as little better than cattle. The murder of a native by a Sikh is punished by a fine to the Government of from 16 to 20 rupees of which 4 rupees are paid to the family of the deceased, if a Hindu, and 2 rupees if he was a Mahammedan. Unpaid forced labour was the rule, and for this purpose people were seized and driven along the roads, tied together with rope like slave gangs. The villages were deserted and the taxes sometimes amounted to nine-tenths of the whole harvest.

Indian politicians are prone to attack the present Government and they even complain bitterly of their present condition and speak of it as slavery. It is well sometimes to review the history of the past and to show the pit out of which they have been digged and the incalculable benefits which have accrued to the Indian peoples from just and beneficent rule.

Kashmir came under the Pax Britannica in 1846, when the country was ceded to the British Government by the Sikhs in lieu of a war indemnity, after the battle of Sobraon. A week later the British transferred Kashmir to Golab Singh, receiving in exchange 75 lakhs of rupees (£500,000), less than one year's revenue at the present time. A nominal

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annual tribute was arranged, consisting of one horse, twelve shawl goats and three pairs of Kashmir shawls. Golab Singh was bound by the treaty to "join with the whole of his military force the British troops when employed in the hills, or in the territories adjoining his possessions." The British Government on their part pledged themselves "to give aid to Maharajah Golab Singh in protecting his territories from external enemies."

Since that time Kashmir has been under Dogra rule and British influence. Hindus, Buddhists, Kashmiri Mahammedans, Moghuls, Afghans and Sikhs had all in turn occupied this unhappy country. But with the accession of Maharajah Golab Singh dawned an era of peace and continuity of administration. Kashmir owes very much of its subsequent progress to the organization and administrative work of the British. The Political Agents and the British heads of departments have rendered service of incalculable value. The great land settlement carried through by Sir Andrew Wingate and Sir Walter Lawrence was a veritable Magna Charta for the peasantry. During the past few decades Kashmir has made considerable progress upon the road to recovery from its former sorrows and woes. The accession of the present Maharajah has ushered in a new era.



WATERING THE CROPS

The water-pot is raised from the well by the long lever, with heavy counterpoise, & emptied with the foot into a wooden channel. This method has probably been in use from time immemorial.

CHAPTER VIII

RESOURCES & DEVELOPMENT

CENTURIES of misrule and oppression leave wounds which are slow to heal. The natural reaction to official tyranny and exactions is dishonesty, fraud and cunning in the people. In the absence of a healthy public opinion, bribery and corruption are rampant. Many State servants are simply parasites. The peculations and embezzlements of officials are regarded as a matter of course, and they are emulated on varying scales by those who hold any kind of subordinate office under the State.

“There’s not a crime
But takes its proper change out still in crime
If once rung on the counter of this world.”

In olden days, the interests of the villagers were largely subordinated to those of the official classes, and the inhabitants of the city of Srinagar. Many of these were influential and in closer contact with the rulers. As a consequence grain was taken from the villagers at oppressively low rates. They were also liable to very frequent calls for forced labour (*begár*). Every year there used to be a levy of coolies to carry military stores to the Frontier province of Gilgit. This placed enormous powers for oppression in the hands of the local administration. From the chief down to the humblest messenger

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this was an unfailing source of income. Meanwhile the poor and friendless, any who resisted the exactions, or submitted complaints to higher authorities, any who sought religious freedom, or in other ways incurred the wrath of the authorities might be seized and sent off on the hated task of carrying loads a thirteen days' journey over rough mountain tracks. Their condition was indeed little better than that of slaves; and if, as was sometimes the case, cholera clung to their camps, the unburied corpses of hundreds of these poor begáris marked the line of march from Srinagar to Gilgit.

These gross abuses of power have to a large extent been stopped. The peasantry now have much more liberty. There may, sometimes, be a tendency for the pendulum to swing too far in the opposite direction. When those who have been oppressed obtain freedom, they may be disinclined to render legitimate assistance or provide supplies without exorbitant payment. A certain amount of compulsory labour is necessary for the upkeep of communications. It is to be regarded as the rendering of personal service in lieu of money and as part of the conditions under which they hold their land.

There are still times of recurring difficulty in the supply of grain to the city of Srinagar. Whenever there is any threat of shortage, it is at once intensified by "cornering" on the part of dealers. Those of the population who have ready money and who have had previous experience of the discomfort and danger of partial famine, at once feverishly buy in considerable stocks. Then there is a scare and prices rise still higher. Immediately after the Great War the city suffered greatly. The authorities were slow to

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act. Even the British advisers, holding academic theories on the subject of not interfering with grain traffic, failed to take the initiative.

The right course was obvious—to purchase grain at liberal rates from the villagers and sell it at the lowest price in the city which would cover all costs. When Lord Reading, the Viceroy, visited Kashmir he at once grasped the situation and gave the necessary orders. Even in remote Kashmir, the price of food grains, the rate of living and the scale of wages have all increased considerably since the War. To some extent this means a real gain to the actual working classes of the population; but the high rates of pay offered by Government Departments have made both skilled and untrained labour more expensive and difficult to obtain.

The quietest and most secluded spot cannot continue to resist the tide of progress and advance which beats upon its shores. Kashmir is undergoing rapid changes. There are many new houses, metalled roads, substantial masonry bridges, solid embankments, electric lights and increasing motor traffic. The creation of the State Council, the inauguration of the great land settlement with just taxation, the reorganization of the Financial, Public Works, Postal, Telegraph and Forest Departments have contributed largely to the material welfare of the people. There is ample room for increase in population. Immense areas may still be brought under cultivation.

Famine will never again, under wise administration, assume the appalling proportions of the years 1878-9. Sanitation has achieved great victories in the past—notably the introduction of a supply

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of pure water to the city, whereby thousands of lives have been saved in subsequent cholera epidemics. Kashmir now has an excellent Medical Service. The Hospital of the Church Missionary Society, which was first in the field, has many thousand out-patients annually and very extensive surgical work. The State Medical Institutions are also doing valuable work. The causes underlying the deficient female population need attention and in view of the prevalence of small-pox, vaccination, which is already popular, needs further extension. A Leper Hospital was founded many years ago by the staff of the Kashmir Mission Hospital. This was generously supported and has now been taken over by the State. There is a serious increase of tuberculosis, especially in the city, which has long called for vigorous action.

Education has made considerable progress. The first schools were started by the agents of the Church Missionary Society. No one has done more for Kashmir than the Rev. C. E. Tyndale Biscoe, whose work, carried on in a manner very similar to the Boy Scout Movement, has done much to promote the best type of education. The State has followed suit and now maintains excellent schools and colleges.

Field produce in Kashmir is very abundant. The output of rice is enormous. The Indian corn crop is also very large. Wheat, barley and buckwheat are grown in considerable amounts. Grain is not exported to any great extent, unless there is scarcity in the Panjab. Much fruit is despatched to the Plains. In the autumn, strings of ponies, heavily laden with pears, apples, and walnuts make their way down the chief roads to India. Enterprising

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merchants bring in camels and go round the villages collecting walnuts. Potatoes are an increasing export, as is also linseed.

Up on the mountain pastures the gujars have large herds of cows and buffaloes, and they bring down immense quantities of ghee (clarified butter) for export. The forests of Kashmir produce enormous supplies of marketable timber. These are floated down the Jhelum river. It is an interesting sight to watch the operations of the men engaged in this lumber trade. Armed with long poles they are constantly engaged in pushing off stranded barks of timber or sleepers from the shallows or levering them off the rocks on which they have lodged. Large quantities of hides and skins are sent out of Kashmir and, since the War, there has been an increasing demand for furs in British markets. Raw wool, woollen cloth and considerable amounts of raw silk are exported. The silk industry having been seriously affected by the advent of the synthetic product, it would be wise to pay more attention to the development of silk weaving.

There are other resources which have been, only partially, exploited. In the forests and on the margs there are many medicinal plants of great value. It is a curious fact that China is indebted to Kashmir for much of the Kot root, from which the fragrant joss incense sticks are prepared. Another interesting product is saffron. On the road to Anant Nág, and 7 miles from Srinagar, is the little town of Pampur. On either side of this are extensive plateaux (*karewahs*), famous for their fields of saffron. When the flowers appear, in the month of October, there are immense sheets of mauve blossom. The

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scene is beautiful, and large numbers of people go out to look at it. The petals are so delicate that the transmitted sunlight imparts a peculiar brilliancy to the colour. The best saffron is obtained from the brilliant orange vermillion stigma. The crop is valuable and it is sold for about four shillings an ounce. This is one of the most ancient of Kashmir industries. For there is a legend that in the days of King Lalatáditya, in the eighth century, a Nág or water nymph, who had an eye affection, which was aggravated by the poisonous vapours proceeding from his own mouth, came for treatment to a famous physician residing in Pampur. The physician effected a cure, and the Nág out of gratitude presented him with a bulb of saffron.

The mineral wealth of Kashmir must be great. Most promising strata of coal have been discovered in the southern hills. This will prove an important source of revenue. Iron ore is abundant in places. Hitherto it has been smelted with wood, which is a rather primitive procedure. Copper has been found in places. In the Kishtiwari district, up a narrow valley which drains into the Chenab river, some years ago a landslip disclosed some curious oblong crystals of a blue colour. These were sapphires. Some of them were of great size. There is no difficulty in finding a market for them. It is a harder matter to protect them from poachers.

Of imports, cotton goods are the most important. Salt, tea, sugar, iron, copper and other metals, and also kerosene oil are imported in large quantities. To these must be added machinery of all kinds including motor cars and a very large number of manufactured articles.

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With its copious water supply, unlimited electrical power will be available in Kashmir, when required for commercial use. At present it is widely used in the City and suburbs for lighting and heating. The introduction of a railway will give a great impetus to trade. Under favourable conditions and especially if there were greater facilities for transport, much raw material might be prepared or manufactured for export. Various existing industries such as basket weaving, oilpresses, potteries, paper works, tanneries, saw mills, dye and soap works, mills for weaving carpets and cloth, and match factories might be further developed and workshops for high class carpentry and cabinet making might be greatly improved and other industries started.

The northern races and those living in mountainous countries have in the time past been those who have taken a leading part in history. Kashmir may have a great future before it. In physique and intellectual development its people compare favourably with those of any part of India. The administration is improving. As officers of better training and with higher ideals replace those of the old school there will be greater progress and many abuses which still exist will disappear.

The extension of education must bring about great changes. At present the villages and outlying valleys are virgin soil. Female education, by bringing the earliest possible influence to bear upon the children, through their mothers, will tend to elevate the race in health, mind and morals. The last is of special importance because owing to the history of Kashmir the people have become so accustomed to protecting themselves against exaction

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and oppression by using lies and deceit as weapons of defence, that there is very little public opinion in favour of integrity and scrupulous honesty.

Kashmir owes much to the agents of the Church Missionary Society. For more than half a century, in no spirit of narrow propaganda, they have, both in the Schools and Hospitals, worked unremittingly for the moral uplift of the people.



ONE OF THE ROUTES TO THE CAVE OF AMARNATH

This is only practicable when the torrent is bridged by snow. The mountains in the background are 16 to 17 thousand feet high.

CHAPTER IX

ANCIENT TEMPLES & SHRINES

THE Hindus of olden days had the gift of choosing very fine positions for their religious buildings. Near the centre of the valley, but on the north-eastern side, and close to Srinagar, there is a very conspicuous hill, the Takht-i-Suleiman, called by the Hindus Shankarachára. This rises to a height of 1,000 feet above the plain and overlooks Srinagar. It is crowned by an ancient temple.

The first religious edifice on this commanding site was probably erected by Jalóka, the son of the great Buddhist convert, Asoka, about 200 B.C. For a considerable part of the way up the hill there are rough steps, formed by slabs of stone, the remains of an old staircase. The approach is in this respect curiously like that to many of the Buddhist temples in China. Indeed this hill is still regarded as sacred by Buddhists. The plinth of the temple and a stone-lined tank hewn in the rock close by, on the south side, are doubtless the remains of the earliest buildings.

The present Hindu temple is most interesting. It is believed to have been erected by Raja Gopaditya who reigned from 253 A.D. to 328 A.D. It was dedicated to Jyeshteswara, a form of the god Siva. The temple is beautifully constructed on an octagonal plinth 30 feet high, of perfectly dressed and

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accurately fitting blocks of grey limestone, superimposed without mortar. Up the east side passes a broad flight of stairs, each step of which is formed by a single massive block. Arching over the foot of the staircase is a solid wall. This is also carried up on either side of the steps to the top of the plinth, which is encircled by a most ornamental parapet 4 feet high, consisting of thirteen arches to each side of the octagon, with intervening pillars carrying a continuous solid stone triangular coping. From the centre of the plinth, on a richly corniced raised platform, nearly 6 feet high, rises the temple to a height of 20 feet. It is square, with on each face two projecting gables, the smaller enclosed by the greater, but projecting a foot and a quarter beyond it. These gables are triangular and without the trefoil arch which is to be seen in temples of a later date. The entrance to the temple is on the east side. The interior is circular; and, raised on a quadrangular stone platform is a magnificent cone of polished black and red serpentine, forming a linga or phallic emblem. The temple was originally surmounted by a four-sided pyramidal roof of stone blocks. It must then have been a most impressive building, rising to a height of 70 feet from the summit of the mountain. The roof has disappeared. It is replaced by a dome of comparatively modern masonry. This was probably built by the tolerant Sultan Zain-ul-ab-ul-Din, in the fifteenth century, to repair the destruction wrought by his predecessors. With this exception the original temple is in a wonderful state of preservation, although much worn by the elements. This is the more remarkable, that neither in the lofty plinth nor in the parapets was any mortar



MARTAND. THE TEMPLE OF THE SUN

Erected by the Hindu king, Ranaditya, in the fifth century. The beautiful cloisters, built two centuries later, show Greek influence.

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used. The stone contains many interesting fossils, including small ammonites and other marine shells. On great occasions small bonfires are lighted on the hill and even on the plinth of the temple. More damage has been done to the stone by this than by centuries of exposure to weather. Of recent years an electric installation has been introduced, by which light is thrown on the building at night; and a powerful lamp, placed on the pinnacle of the temple, can be seen from a great distance. The effect is pleasing. But the poles and wires are, in the day time, a great disfigurement.

200 feet below, running right round the whole hill, is an ancient path used in olden days by pilgrims in their ceremonial processions round the sacred edifice. This has fallen into disuse. But the temple is still used for worship. Weekly, pious Hindus may be seen laboriously climbing the rocky path which zigzags up the western slopes. On festivals it is a gay scene. Hundreds of brightly-dressed men and women stream up the western ridge. For probably more than twenty centuries this has been going on, only interrupted in times of savage Mahammedan persecution. At Puran Mashi, the time of the full moon of the month Sáwan, usually in July or August, immense crowds of Hindus make a pilgrimage at night to the temple on this hill. This coincides with the consummation of the pilgrimage to the Sacred Cave of Amarnath.

This cave, which is four marches beyond Pahlgam, the popular hill station in the Lidar Valley, is situated at a height of over 13,000 feet in a mountain recess, reached by crossing a high pass. It is situated up a narrow valley, the trough of which is

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always full of snow. All around, the pinnacled limestone rocks present weird and fantastic shapes, and they are of that peculiar reddish-yellow tint which especially appeals to Hindus. This is a great centre of pilgrimage. Every year, in the late summer, hundreds of Hindus, men and women, with a band of half nude religious mendicants (Sádhus) make their way to this cave. In bad weather, for those with insufficient clothing and no tents, the journey may be dangerous. An untimely fall of snow may cause many fatalities. At the back of the cave, which is a large hemispherical hollow about 30 yards in height, breadth and depth, some springs which issue have become frozen and form solid dome-shaped masses resting on a smooth surface of ice, with curved and zigzag markings. The whole block of ice is clear as crystal. The central portion, being somewhat in the form of a phallic emblem, is an object of special adoration. Pilgrims come from all parts of India to Amarnath, for it is a place of great fame. Sometimes as many as 6,000 or 7,000 take part in the pilgrimage. As they reach the steep slope at the foot of the cave, the more zealous of the number, both men and women, cast off all their clothing and with scanty covering of birch bark, they climb to the entrance, striking up, as they go, a fervid chant.

As the pilgrims emerge from the cave, they shout out a final salutation or song of praise. The surrounding holes and fissures are the abode of pigeons. If any have remained in the cave, and, frightened by the unwonted clamour, they fly out, this is regarded as the climax and witness to the acceptance of the worshippers. In order, however,

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to acquire the full amount of merit it is necessary to approach and quit the cave by certain definitely appointed steep and toilsome routes.

There are two small temples in Kashmir which are still marvellously perfect—those of Bhaumjoo and Páyech. About 5 miles from Islámabad, just beyond the sacred fishpond of Báwan, there are caves in the limestone cliff which rises from the bank of the Lidar river. One of these has been still further excavated. An ornate doorway has been carved and from this a gloomy passage 50 feet long leads to the door of the temple. This is flanked by two arched recesses, which doubtless originally held images, and it is surmounted by a high triangular pediment reaching to the apex of the roof with a trefoiled tympanum. The whole temple is so simple in construction that it is quite probable that it may be one of the very earliest and date from the fifth century A.D.

The Páyech temple is the most beautiful of all these ancient Hindu shrines. It is about 18 miles south of Srinagar and 5 miles from the left bank of the River Jhelum. This temple is an architectural gem. It stands at the foot of a high tableland. The central chamber (cella) is 8 feet square and it has an open doorway on each of the four sides. So solid is this little temple that only ten stones were employed—the four corners being each a single stone; the sculptured tympanums over the doorways four others; while two more compose the pyramidal roof, the lower of these being a colossal mass 8 feet square by 4 feet in height. The purely architectural features are beautiful. Over the doorway, however, are more roughly executed sculptures,

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representing Brahma, Vishnu, Siva and the goddess Durga. In the centre of the interior is the usual phallic stone linga.

Owing to its proximity to Srinagar, the little Pandrathan temple is easy to visit. In its general design it is very similar to that of Páyech, but larger, being 18 feet square with a projecting portico on each side. The ceiling of the domed roof is remarkable as it is covered with sculpture of purely classical design. The date of this temple is early tenth century. In those days the temple was part of the old capital of Kashmir which occupied the neighbouring slopes. The seat of government had indeed been transferred to the present Srinagar site some centuries before by King Pravarusena, but the old city was still partly inhabited. About the year 960 A.D. it was completely destroyed by fire. The temple, which stood in the centre of a tank, was the only building which escaped destruction.

There are other old temples which are well worth visiting. The ruins of Naran Nág are about 6 miles up the Wangat Valley. They stand on an eminence at the entrance to a gorge. Pine trees rise steeply behind and a torrent rushes below. A stream was apparently trained through the cloisters. In this lonely but beautiful recess a body of Hindu priests must have lived and performed their mystic rites perhaps for centuries. The temples were no doubt regarded as the portals to the sacred lake of Gangabal, 5,000 feet further up at the foot of the revered Mt. Haramouk.

Up a narrow valley, about 5 leagues to the east of Srinagar, there are the ruins of the Nárástan temple.



THE TEMPLE OF PAYECH

An architectural gem. The most perfect & the most beautiful of all the ancient Hindu Shrines.

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Another temple, that of Kothair, which is beautifully situated at the foot of the pass which leads over to Kishtiwār, is only 3 miles from Achchibal.

On the wide stretch of plateau to the west of the junction of the Sind and Jhelum rivers there are still to be seen the remains of King Lalatāditya's ancient capital, Pariasapura. There is, however, very little left—a few scattered ruins with massive blocks of grey limestone and remains of sculptured capitals and mouldings. No trace remains of the colossal column which he is said to have erected here. These ruins have for centuries been regarded as convenient stone quarries from which shapely stones can be obtained for building purposes. Worse still has been the breaking up of valuable material for road metal.

At Bhaniyar, 10 miles below Baramula on the Jhelum Valley road, there is an interesting old temple. Near the river, in the immediate vicinity, is an immense block of limestone which incidentally shows the way in which the large masses of stone for these temples were cut. On one surface there is a line of deeply-drilled holes indicating where the division was to be effected, probably with the aid of wedges.

At Avantipoora, 16 miles from Srinagar, on the road to Anant Nág (Islámabad), is the site of the capital of King Avantivarman. The ruins of the great temple there are of special interest. For centuries, only the upper part of the gateways was visible, the rest being absolutely buried under alluvial deposit. Recent excavations have revealed a broad flight of stone steps leading up to the remains of a central edifice, which stands in the

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centre of an immense quadrangle enclosed by a colonnade of great architectural beauty. Many of the pillars are of exquisite design.

Owing to its magnificent situation the palm for ancient Hindu temples must be awarded to Martand. Three miles east of Anant Nág, on the great plateau which joins the Islámabad hill to the mountain range which bounds the left bank of the Lidar river, are the ruins of this, the most famous of Kashmir temples. The site is absolutely unique. Behind us are the limestone ridges which run round to the north to form the cliffs of Báwan. But in front and right and left is a prospect which can be nowhere matched. We look down on to vast expanses of plain streaked with green and gold and brown. Gleams and flashes of light play on hundreds of miles of flooded rice-fields. Here and there the course of the winding river can be traced. Further away are mauve coloured slopes, blue ridges, and stretches of faint grey haze, obscuring the distance. Beyond all is a complete circle of snows, with a few banks of fleecy clouds lightly resting here and there, and sending up their masses of cumulus into the azure blue of the vaulted heavens above.

Facing west is an old grey weather-worn gateway of massive blocks of stone, the sculpturing on which has almost disappeared. From either side of this a graceful colonnade of 84 columns with intervening trefoil-arched recesses is carried round to form a quadrangle nearly 100 yards long and 50 yards broad. These fine cloisters and the temple which they enclose, with their fluted pillars, Doric capitals, massive square architraves to the doorways, and their elegant trefoiled arches, although sadly ruined,



THE SIND VALLEY

The Sind river is the most important tributary of the Helum. When the snow is melting it comes down in vast volume & with terrific force. After continued heavy rain it wreaks devastation & destroys most of its bridges. The floral beauty of the Valley is great.

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still show all the characteristics of the old classical Kashmiri style of architecture.

From a mound in the quadrangle rises what was originally a lofty central edifice, approached by a wide flight of steps. The ruins of this temple are now only 40 feet in height ; but if the original roof was of the same character as that found on other temples of the same period, which still remain, there must have been a lofty pyramid of stone blocks, towering up to a pinnacle 75 feet above the ground and flanked by smaller pyramids covering the wings. From the *Rájatarangini*, the famous chronicles of Kashmir, (ably translated by Sir Aurel Stein), it appears probable that the central temple was built by Ranaditya about the first half of the fifth century A.D., and the colonnade by King Lalatáditya in the eighth century.

Kashmir has changed less than most countries as the centuries roll on and it is not difficult to picture to ourselves the olden days—the temple of Martand bathed in rosy light as the sun sinks behind the western snowy range. On the steps of the central edifice, at its western portal, stands the Hindu priest blowing his shell trumpet, while another strikes a bell. A few figures clad in grey woollen tunics and caps are moving about. At the edge of the neighbouring tank are some bright touches of colour. Women arrayed in orange, scarlet, violet and green gowns are filling their brass water pots, or carrying them on their heads, while little children, also gaily dressed, run by their side. All the surroundings, the mountains and the Valley, the plateau stretching away to Anant Nág and the distant encircling ranges, silhouetted in purple

Ancient Temples & Shrines

against the golden sky are the same as now. As night falls there is wafted on the still air the fragrant odour of incense and the sound of voices chanting in the temple under that pyramidal roof which rises as a great shadow pointing to the starry firmament above.

CHAPTER X

THE MOGHUL GARDENS

THE Hindus of olden times, with patient hands, had reared many shrines to propitiate fierce demons, to avert calamities and to ensure the peaceful growth and development of their families. They had long passed away. Their successors had drained the cup of persecution to the very dregs. Thousands of them had been slain, Kashmir had passed under Moslem sway, at first intolerant and murderous, but gradually toning down to beneficence. Under the Moghuls Kashmir was fertile and prosperous. It was their hill resort. When, in the summer heat, Delhi became unpleasant, these monarchs used to make their exodus, not to Simla, the modern seat of government, but to the Valley of Kashmir. By the side of the Dal Lake and overlooking that great expanse of water, beautiful gardens were laid out. These still exist and are amongst the most attractive resorts in Kashmir. Beside the Shalimar, the Nishát and the Nassim Baghs there were also royal gardens at Khushki Habbak, at the extreme north-west end of the lake, at Bahrar near to the Hari Parbat Fort and at the Chashm-Shahi at the foot of the mountains on the east. Not far from the last is the Perimahal—a series of terraces faced with masonry high up on the hillside. This was probably also a pleasure

The Moghul Gardens

garden, with a little stream running down the centre. Even the islands on the Dal Lake were brought into the scheme, for they form a straight line at right angles to the Perimahal ruins. This Fairy Palace (for that is the meaning of its name) must have been a charming spot in those days. It was a terraced garden in four tiers—each 20 or 30 feet high with flanking towers. The walls contain lines of Saracenic arched recesses surmounted in places by galleries. There were central domed pavilions through which the crystal water rippled and then fell in glittering cascades. Where there is water in Kashmir it is easy to cultivate flowers. The Perimahal may have been as gay with floral beauty as any of the other gardens. It stands about 400 feet above the level of the lake and it is approached by a zig-zag road at an easy gradient. Behind towers up the Zebanwan Mountain to a height of 8,000 feet, the gullies densely clothed with witch hazel and a sprinkling of blue pine.

The view from the Perimahal is particularly fine. At our feet stretches the Dal Lake with beyond it the Hari Parbat hill crowned by the battlemented fort. To the left is the Takht-i Suleiman, 1,000 feet high, with the temple on the summit, which makes such a landmark and which was ancient even in the days of the Moghuls. The snowy Pir Panjál range forms a fitting background to a scene of surpassing beauty.

In the distance across the lake we see an indistinct mass of foliage, which marks the position of Akbar's garden—the Nassim Bagh. This garden is different in style to the others. It is more like an English park. There are acres of smooth green sward,



SHALIMAR BAGH

In the distance is Mt. Mahadeo. On gala days clear water flows down the broad channels & falls in smooth cascades over the rows of niches. These have padella lights or bright flowers put into them. The fountains in the foreground throw up graceful spray with charming effect.

The Moghul Gardens

broken only by clumps of white and purple iris. Here there are avenues of chenar trees with massive trunks and great tortuous limbs. These plane trees attain a great size and their foliage is dense. The individual leaves are very fine. Digitate in form, the transverse span in a large leaf may be as much as 15 inches. The trunks show a beauty, both of form and colour. The bark peels off in patches leaving a pale yellow surface, which has a great capacity for reflecting the colour of surrounding objects—the blue of the sky, the green of the turf, or most beautiful of all, the rosy tints of sunrise or sunset. The whole garden or park is on a raised area which slopes gently down to the lake 40 feet below. Here and there are the ruins of masonry—the remains of terraces. The Nassim Bagh is a favourite camping ground for visitors in the summer. Houseboats are moored along the front, or groups of tents are pitched in the shade under the glorious trees. Here the melodious note of the golden oriole may be constantly heard. Many jackdaws have made their homes in the hollows of the trees. The soft cooing of the dove which steals through the air seems to complete the quiet-restful feeling which pervades this lovely spot. It is easy to understand the attraction of the Nassim Bagh to those satiated with the pomp and glamour of an oriental court and seeking escape from the heat and glare of Delhi and the arid plains.

Half an hour by boat across the blue waters of the lake, going eastward, we enter an ancient canal, bordered by chenar trees and leading straight to the entrance of the Shalimar Bagh, "The Abode or Hall of Love," laid out by the Emperor Jahangir in

The Moghul Gardens

1619. This garden owes much of its charm to its situation. In the background rises Mt. Mahadeo, with snow-capped peak and pine-clad slopes. It is almost as high as Monte Rosa. The main design of the garden is Persian—a succession of terraces with a broad central water-course passing under graceful pillared pavilions, the water falling in cascades into square pools lined with ornate stonework and dotted with fountains. The largest pavilion is on the highest terrace. This spacious building has walls and pillars of black marble, highly polished, as are also the elegant brackets which support the roof. As we watch groups of Kashmiri Hindu women brilliantly clad in turquoise blue, in orange, scarlet, violet, deep purple or pale green, sometimes in clusters, sometimes breaking up and scattering over the velvety lawns, we feel that they impart just that touch of colour and oriental interest which is needed to give the maximum effect of exquisite beauty. We can almost imagine ourselves back in the seventeenth century and looking on, as the ladies of Jahangir's or Shah Jahan's court wandered about in the cool shade. This upper terrace was walled off from the rest of the garden and flanked by picturesque towers, occupied no doubt by a trusty guard. Here the ladies of the royal zenanas had their pleasant summer quarters; for from the time of our Henry VIII to that of Charles I the whole of Northern India was under the dominion of the Moghuls, and Kashmir was their hot weather resort. In those days the annual exodus from Delhi must have been a wonderful spectacle. The procession of gaily caparisoned elephants with gilded howdahs, the multitudes of brilliantly attired troops, so

The Moghul Gardens

much more picturesque than nowadays ; countless elephants, camels, mules, baggage ponies and bullock carts extending over many miles of dusty road. Nowadays, from April to September, a continuous stream of visitors sets in, bound for Kashmir, from all parts of India. But how different is the mode of transit ; for, leaving the railway train at Rawal Pindi, they are able in one or two days' motor journey to reach Srinagar in comfort and without undue fatigue.

The Nishát Bagh, built by Asaf Khan, Nur Mahal's brother, is thought by some to be even more beautiful than the Shalimar. It is much larger and surrounded by a high wall with towers at the corners. The general arrangement is similar. There are lines of magnificent chenar trees, a central watercourse with fountains in ornate stone-lined pools into which the water falls from a height. At the centre of one of the terraces and bridging the channel of flowing water, is an octagonal platform—a Moslem place of prayer. This, which is beautiful in its simplicity, consists of slabs of grey limestone resting on a 5-foot plinth, the sides of which show delicate tracery in geometrical design. The Nishát is a garden of wide spaces and it lends itself to wonderful floral displays. Broad flower beds, set in smooth green turf, extend in stretches of 50 to 100 yards and exhibit wonderful effects of colour. It may be zinnias, scarlet, orange, crimson and gold, or pink balsams, petunias—a sea of pink and white, sheets of nasturtiums or vast crowds of pansies with their curious monkey faces but brilliant colours. The whole garden slopes down towards the lake and on the first terrace, near the

The Moghul Gardens

entrance, there is a central pavilion, a cool, pleasant building in Persian style, enclosing a little court open to the sky and through which the water flows and falls in a cascade into a pool below. The view from here across the lake is particularly attractive when the sun is setting.

Shah Jahan first saw this garden in 1633. Feeling that it was too beautiful a possession for a subject, even though that subject happened to be his father-in-law and Wazir, he rather pointedly praised it, hoping that the hint would be taken and the Nishát Bagh be offered to him. Asaf Khan, however, did not choose to see the point of the Emperor's undisguised admiration. Shah Jahan, who was piqued, then had the water supply cut off. One of Asaf Khan's retainers, greatly daring, removed the obstruction. Asaf Khan was scared and at once ordered the water to be stopped again. But the Emperor had already heard what had happened ; and the unfortunate servant was summoned to the Imperial presence, and went fearing the worst. To his astonishment Shah Jahan, instead of condign punishment, awarded him a khillat or robe of honour in token of his approval of the act of a faithful servant ; and Asaf Khan was henceforth permitted to enjoy unmolested an ample supply of water for his garden, from the same stream as that which supplied the Emperor's garden at Shalimar.

The Chashm-Sháhi, or King's Fountain, is a small garden at the foot of the hills near to the Perimahal. The approach is through a terraced orchard of cherries, peaches and apricots and is most beautiful when the trees are in blossom. The garden is a walled enclosure overshadowed by an

The Moghul Gardens

immense chenar tree of great age. Passing through the western doorway we find a prettily laid out garden with a spring, a flowing stream curbed by stone borders and waterfalls from terrace to terrace. There are, at either end, old galleried buildings with cedar pillars and carved stone work, and what is perhaps best of all, a wonderful view over the lake and across the valley.

At the east end of the Valley of Kashmir, near where the road to Jammu ascends in immense zig-zags to cross the Banihal Pass and join the Chenab Valley at Ramband, is the beautiful garden of Vernag. This was planted by the Emperor Jahangir, whose favourite residence it became and who desired to be carried there when dying. Amid avenues of lofty chenar trees are bubbling springs and crystal streams. At the upper end of the garden under the shadow of a steep pine-clad limestone scarp lies a deep, quiet, octagonal pool of dark blue water 50 yards across, bounded by blocks of shaped stone and surrounded by a paved walk and an ancient wall of masonry with arched recesses. This tank is crowded with sacred fish, some of which attain a considerable size. When crumbs or rice are thrown to them, they come together and form a seething mass of brown backs and gleaming yellow sides as they struggle for the food. This pool is the source of the Jhelum river. From it issues a clear, sparkling stream which passes under an old balconied building by which it is spanned. It flows down the centre of the garden, below which it falls in a silvery sheet and is then augmented by the water from other springs, among which is the Veth Vattru, which, although much smaller, is regarded by the

The Moghul Gardens

Hindus as the real source of the Veth, as they call the Jhelum.

About 9 miles from Vernag, somewhat to the left of the direct route from Islámabad, a ridge juts into the valley from the northern range, and terminates in the pointed cedar-covered Sosanwar Hill. On the northern slope of this is Achchibal, another of Jahangir's beautiful gardens, with lines of chenars, between which flows a clear stream trained into a broad stone-lined channel with spacious square tanks and numerous fountains, fed by the copious springs which gush out of the hillside above. Here, too, the flowers are very charming and the garden presents a scene of entrancing beauty when the fountains are playing.

Many of the trees which we see in these gardens must date back to the seventeenth century and, in some respects, owing to their present grandeur and great size, the gardens must now be even more beautiful than in the days of their founders when the trees must have been much smaller.



VERNAG SACRED SPRING AND MOGHUL GARDEN

The favourite residence of the Emperor Jahangir. The spring is enclosed by stone masonry in the form of an octagon. The pool is very deep, 50 yards across, & of rich blue colour. It is full of sacred fish. The Hindus consider it to be the source of the Jhelum river.

CHAPTER XI

THE LAKES OF KASHMIR

THE Valley of Kashmir bears a strong resemblance to Italy. The bright sunshine and deep blue skies, the lines of poplars, the numerous mulberry trees, the vineyards and the background of mountains with gleams of distant snows—all tend to remind us of the country between Milan and Venice. Like Italy Kashmir is also a land of lakes. But here there is a difference. There are no hotels or inns and no charming little towns with picturesque church steeples. There are no convenient steamboats to take us about. The Kashmiri lakes have little in common with, for instance, Garda with its deep blue waters, its luxurious hotels, and the pretty little craft with orange-coloured sails. The view from Serbelloni on Lake Como is of its kind one of the most beautiful in the world. Maggiore, with its beautiful little islands and wide expanse, is also unique. The Kashmir lakes are quite different and yet they have a very great beauty of their own. The Dal or City Lake occupies an area of 10 square miles. On two sides it is enclosed by a mountainous amphitheatre rising to a height of over 3,000 feet above the water. The north end is shallow and surrounded by marsh which is planted with immense groves of willows. At this corner of the lake the River Arrah, a stream of pure

The Lakes of Kashmir

cold water, fed by the snows, flows in, passing through the scattered hamlet of Telbal. The mountains are so near that the view, as we travel up this winding river by boat, is exceedingly pretty.

The greatest expanse of open water is to be seen from the point where the stream enters the lake. Here we have a vista of 5 miles, with the Takht Hill standing up to the south and range upon range of snow-capped mountains to the right and left.

There can be no more glorious a prospect than that which meets the eye in the late summer when there are miles and miles of lotuses in full blossom. These form sheets of pink in the pale green setting of their great circular leaves, which rise from the opalescent water of the lake, the distant surroundings of which are so impressive. At the foot of the mountains, round the borders of the Dal, are numerous small villages embowered in orchards and the various renowned gardens constructed by the Delhi Emperors.

Although some parts of the lake are quite deep, it is unlike the Swiss and Italian lakes with their rocky and steeply shelving shores. To the west there are immense areas of marsh. Much of this has been reclaimed as there are innumerable intersecting canals, the earth from which has been thrown up on either side and utilized in this way in the construction of gardens and fields. Thus there are many little hamlets scattered about over the Dal area. These are only approachable by water. There is, however, an ancient causeway with many little bridges over the canals which run right across the lake from the village of Renawári to Ishibur on the east side of the lake beyond the

The Lakes of Kashmir

Nishát Bagh. On either side of this and also occupying much of the marshy ground traversed by the canals there are enormous areas bearing reeds. These are much used in mat weaving. The revenue from them and from field produce is very large. The Dal is extraordinarily rich in aquatic plants. It has indeed a special floral beauty of its own. The grandest flower is the lotus, with its pink cup-shaped blossom from 6 to 8 inches across and its large circular pale green leaves 2 feet across and dull red underneath. Globules of water stand like pearls on many of these as they rest on the surface of the lake. In their flowering season, in July and August, the stalks have lengthened and the leaves are above water level, lying about at various angles, a charming background to their magnificent flowers. The *Euryale ferox* is one of the most remarkable of the lake flowers. The leaves of this are quite marvellous. Some are 3 feet across, dark green and shiny, deeply veined, hairy and almost circular. They rest on the surface of the water. The under surface is of a rich purple colour, ribbed and provided with curved spines, half an inch long. The flower is somewhat like a yellow water lily. The white water lily is very abundant and most beautiful. All around are reeds and bulrushes which may attain a height of 8 to 10 feet. These are the home of the moor-hen, the dab-chick, and the reed-warbler. At certain seasons of the year flocks of gulls visit the lake. Herons are common and may be seen patiently standing in shallow water engaged in fishing. Many of the fine chenar trees round the shore have extensive heronries. The floating gardens are not so picturesque as their name would imply. They are made by cutting

The Lakes of Kashmir

the reeds close to their roots. They then float up and form a kind of raft upon which little masses of soil are placed in which cucumbers, melons and tomatoes are grown. On these floating gardens we notice large tufts of azure-blue forget-me-nots, sweet-scented water mint and groups of sturdy willow-herb. Here may be seen the pale blue tailless kingfisher, with orange breast, hovering almost motionless over the surface of the water, dropping into it with a sudden splash and then darting off to a neighbouring bank or on to the branch of a willow. Silently perched on one of the poles used for mooring the floating gardens to the bed of the lake we notice an osprey. Large dragonflies, bright blue, yellow or red, dash over the surface of the water, and swallows wheel overhead.

On the banks of the canals there is a rich growth of white clover. In the summer, fields of scarlet and golden coral-like amaranth and crimson cockscomb flood the landscape with rich colour. Yellow charlock is abundant in the fields and borders. In the month of May the numerous orchards of quinces burst into blossom, and the trees are covered with little snow-white cups. Hanging over the water from rustic trellis-work, we notice tendrils with large leaves and the yellow flowers of the vegetable marrow, cucumber and melon. Colossal pumpkins also may be seen. Later on there are gardens full of tall tufted and tasselled maize, 10 feet high. The dark green foliage of the pomegranate is lighted up by its flashing scarlet blossom. Large blue Kashmiri larkspur, bushes of white roses in profuse bloom, and the lace-like flowers of several varieties of umbelliferae, all contribute to form a scene of surpassing



THE NISHÁT BAGH

Laid out by the brother of Queen Nur Mahal. The approach to the upper terrace was reserved for the ladies of the Court

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beauty. Looking into the depths of the clear water, we admire the long, wavy, translucent, pale green, feathery leaves of water plants, some of which have pushed dainty little pink-flowering spikes just above the surface. There, too, spread out, are the graceful leaves of the water-chestnut (singhara), supported by their buoyant air-filled petioles; and down below we may just see their three-cornered spiny fruit. In the still water, all the nearer beauties are reflected, as in a mirror, and also glimpses of the distant blue of the mountains, the peaks of which are capped with perpetual snow.

It seems strange to speak of a flood as being the greatest danger to which a lake can be exposed. But this is true of the Dal. After very heavy rain, when the river rises abruptly 20 or 30 feet, the city lake, which lies low, would be inundated, and all its fields and gardens and little hamlets submerged, if it were not protected by an embankment. This is pierced by a great lock gate called the Dal Darwáza. Through this the water of the lake constantly pours out into a canal which flows into the river. But when the river rises higher than lake level the doors automatically close. Very pleasant excursions may be made on the lake. Embarking at the Dal Darwáza the visitor may elect to go either straight out towards the mountains and across the open lake for an hour to the Nishát Bagh—a delightful expedition. An alternative route is to enter the canal on the left. After a mile we pass through the village of Renawári and under a picturesque three-arched bridge. If the Nassim Bagh or the Shalimar are to be visited, the canal leads straight on and after another half hour, open water is reached, and

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a little further on at the edge of the lake is the charming little village of Hazrat Bal with a very wide stretch of stone steps down to the water and an ancient shrine. This is one of the repositories of a sacred hair of "the Prophet." This hair was brought to Kashmir by Saiyad Abdullah in 1111 A.D., and he sold it to a merchant for one lakh of rupees. It is said, that when it was first exhibited, the crowd was so great, that many people were crushed to death. At certain seasons of the year a great fair is held here, attended by thousands of worshippers. Sometimes the priest brings it out—the people pack together in a dense mass and he will actually walk on their heads while the whole congregation, thrilled and shaken by intense emotion, sobs and sheds tears.

The Nassim Bagh is close by, but to reach the Shalimar it is necessary to cross the open lake for a couple of miles, passing on the way the pretty little Sona Lanka or golden island.

About a mile to the west of Hazrat Bal there is an arm of the lake with deep water—a favourite resort for bathing. On a plateau between this and the Hari Parbat Hill is the beautifully situated State Leper Hospital, standing in a delightful garden. This, which has accommodation for 120 lepers, was founded by the surgeons of the Kashmir Mission Hospital in 1891.

If the Dal is the most interesting of the lakes of Kashmir, the Wular is the largest and most impressive. Indeed it is the largest freshwater lake in India.

It occupies the west end of the valley. The Jhelum river flows into it and emerges through

The Lakes of Kashmir

the town of Sopur. There is quite a seaside feeling here. Often there is a fresh cool breeze. Like most lakes in the vicinity of mountains, the Wular is liable to sudden storms and the wind rushes down the gorges of Erin and Bandipoor, churning up the smooth surface into foam and raising a sea of rolling waves which are a terror to the timid boatmen. On the rocky shore of Zirri Manz, I have seen surf, dashing spray, and miniature breakers 3 or 4 feet high. There is a certain resemblance to a Norwegian fjord; but here the scale of scenery is infinitely grander. Away to the east, appearing to rise abruptly from the water's edge, is the great mountain mass, which stretches from Bandipoor Valley and the Trágbal Pass on the left, to behind the isolated Manusbal Hill and lake on the right. This mass culminates at its centre in a crown of peaks encircling a magnificent snowfield. This is Mt. Haramouk. The beautiful little Valley of Erin leads up to it. In the early morning these valleys are full of mystery. For they are veiled by the pale grey mist, which hovers over the surface of the lake, and stretches across the base and far up the sides of the mountains. A little higher up can be seen dim blue shadows cast by scarps and ranges of cliffs and the faint outline of the fir forest which clothes their crests. Above all are gleaming snow slopes, with sparkling points of light picked out by the rays of the sun. The surface of the light blue lake is like a mirror. Any raised objects upon it, whether reeds or waterfowl, boats or rocky points, present a sharp contrast of deep shade, looking, indeed, almost black against the high light.

Turning in the opposite direction we see facing us

The Lakes of Kashmir

the Pir Panjál range. In the spring the upper 5,000 feet of this, throughout its whole length, is still under snow. So that we have a marvellous panorama—a continuous line of dazzling white peaks and shoulders 80 miles long and rising nearly 10,000 feet above the valley. An immense forest of silver fir, Himalayan spruce, and blue pine, covers the whole base of this range and reaches half way up. It forms a dark wavy line, the tree-clad crest of which is silhouetted against the snowfields beyond ; and all along the range, the clefts and fissures and gorges are full of snow, continuous with the white mantle above and extending down in Y-shaped prolongations for thousands of feet between the fir-clad slopes. It all looks very near and only just beyond the end of the lake which ever lies silently below as golden dawn touches the tops of the mountains.

On the north side of the lake is a pretty shrine-capped hill, Baba Shukr-uddin. Here there are projecting cliffs and a line of bold black rocks, the sides of which show a white tide mark, from the fluctuations in the level of the water. In a little bay, at the foot of Shukr-uddin, is the hamlet of Zirrimanz, with a sloping beach, on which are lines of shells, water-weeds and driftwood. From Zirrimanz to Bandipoorá is about 5 miles east, across a wide bay, the shores of which are formed by well-tilled ground sloping up to the foot of a pine-clad range which separates us from the beautiful Lolab Valley.

The changeful moods of the lake give it a great charm. The water is often green. But it responds in ever-changing play of colour to the reflections of

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cloud and sky, of snow and of hillside. The Wular is full of fish. At certain seasons it is a favourite resort of wild waterfowl. I have seen stretching across it, a line of duck and geese 3 miles long, and in some places not in single file, but 8 or 10 abreast.

Between the Dal and the Wular there are two other lakes—the Anchar and Mánusbal. The former lies north of the city. It is an extensive shallow sheet of water with marshy borders. Its chief interest is, perhaps, that it can be reached through the Mar canal and is one of the pleasantest routes to Gánderbál, the cool, shady camping ground at the mouth of the Sind river.

From Gánderbál to Mánusbal is a very short distance, for the lake lies between the foot of the mountain spurs at the lower end of the Sind Valley and the River Jhelum. Although only a little over a mile in length the Mánusbal lake is very pretty for it is deep. The bed shelves down steeply from the high ground by which it is surrounded. The water is beautifully clear. Lotuses are abundant. At the east end there are shady terraces watered by a canal brought from the Sind river. It is a very pleasant place to camp in, but mosquitoes are troublesome in the late summer.

The most beautiful time to visit all these valley lakes is in April, May and October. The fruit trees in full blossom, and the chenar trees with their brilliant red autumn tints, add greatly to the beauty of the scene. But August is the time to see the lotuses at their best.

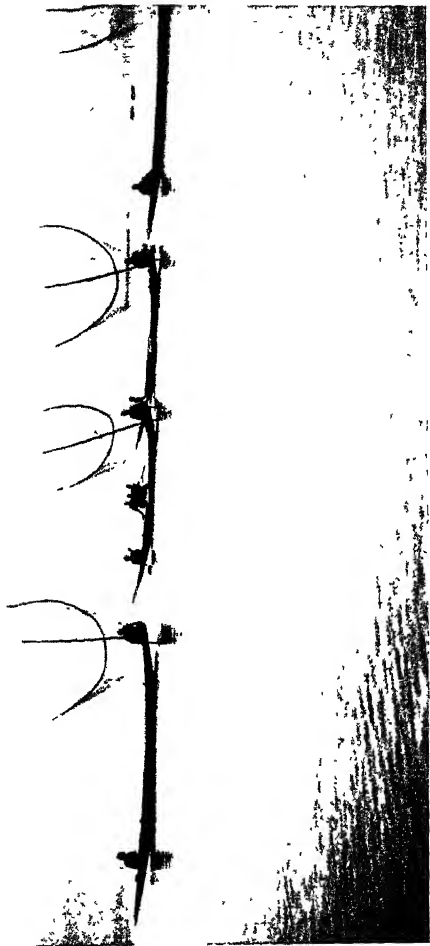
CHAPTER XII

SPRINGS & PIXIES—TARNS & TORRENTS

KASHMIR has a wonderful supply of water. In addition to the lakes, there are the immense tracts devoted to rice cultivation, the fields of which are kept flooded. Beside this, all round the valley there are large springs. These, which are mostly at the foot of limestone hills, are often enclosed in stone-lined tanks and many of them contain sacred fish. Often in the neighbouring villages goitre is common. This disease, although closely connected with infected water supply, is curiously prevalent where those sources are associated with limestone.

Such tanks have probably been regarded with reverence from the earliest times. Many are overshadowed by magnificent old elm trees at the foot of which, leaning against the trunk, are one or more stone Hindu images daubed with red paint. In the "Ain Akbari" it is stated that in 700 places in Kashmir there were carved figures of snakes, worshipped by Hindus, and that most of these were associated with springs. After Vernág rank the sacred ponds at Báwan, near Martand. There is also a beautiful old Hindu sacred pool at Tregám at the west end of the valley.

One of the most ancient forms of worship in Kashmir was that of the pixies, who were believed to live in the water. These were called Nágs ;



THE WULAR LAKE

The largest fresh-water lake in India. It is full of fish. Both spearing & netting are employed. The former is a skilled & sporting method. In netting the boatmen often work in groups with a special type of net shown above.

Springs & Pixies

and they were supposed to assume the form of a snake which enabled them to creep through the hidden mountain channels and emerge at the springs. Sometimes, like mermaids, they are said to have assumed human form, and to have been recognizable by the water which dripped from their locks. Curious legends are told of them. "There is a well-known spring, Vaishak Nág, the water of which is light and sweet. In the early part of May, the wind blows violently for three days and the water appears. In October the water dries up and departs to the Jammu side of the mountains for the winter. This happened in the following way. A holy man from the Jammu side, who deplored the absence of water, came to Vaishak Nág and by good fortune caught the snake, the lord of the spring, and put it into his gourd. While returning thanks, he hung his gourd on a tree. Two women, coming by, thought the gourd might contain butter for anointing their hair, and took the gourd down, whereupon the snake escaped. The holy man returned and discovered his loss. As he stood weeping, Mir Shah Baghdadi appeared, who, moved by the holy man's distress, effected a compromise with the snake. So it comes to pass, that Kashmir gets its water for its rice crop, while the Jammu villages receive water for their spring crops!"

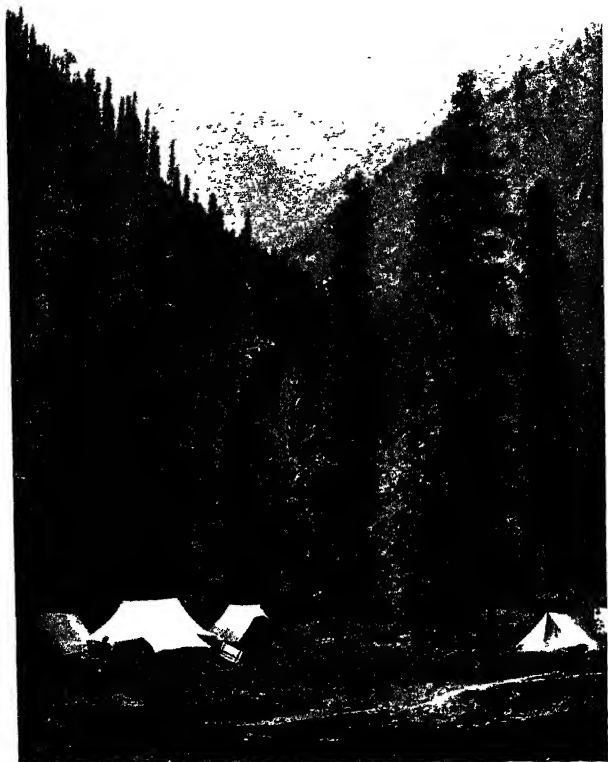
"Although great Pan be dead in Greece, the twilight of the gods is not yet in Kashmir. Every grove has its familiar deity—every clear spring or rushing torrent its water nymph." This cult of springs still goes on. One of the favourite Hindu goddesses is Kir Bhawani. Tula Mula, the great spring of this goddess, is regarded by many as the

Springs & Pixies

most sacred place in Kashmir. It is situated at the mouth of the Sind Valley. The water is of a dark blue colour. The Hindus say, that when famine or cholera is impending, the water changes its tint and becomes darker.

Even amongst Mahammedans, some Hindu customs have survived. It must be remembered, that although Moslems greatly outnumber Hindus and form indeed 98 per cent. of the total population, they were forcibly converted from Hinduism in the fourteenth century; and they retain some indications of their original faith. The most striking of these is their affection for sacred places. One sacred pool will have a Hindu Asthán on one side and a Mahammedan tomb or shrine on the other. On one side a Hindu may be chanting his invocations, while on the opposite bank a Mahammedan darwesh may be reciting the Korán with equal fervour. An easy transition seems to have occurred, when the Hindus embraced Islam under Moslem pressure, and their devotion was transferred from the spring to the tomb.

Of the tributaries of the Jhelum river the most interesting are the Lidar and the Sind. Both these are streams of great size, with an immense volume of water. On both sides of the Lidar Valley, fire-clothed ridges jut down in succession from the scarred and seamed grey peaks. In between are gullies filled with snow. The slopes are composed largely of agglomeratic slate, with outlying low hills of limestone or quartzite. The Lidar Valley is a great contrast to the rocky range by which it is confined. Its rounded contours and gentle slopes are studded with orchards and shaped, near the



CAMP LIFE IN KASHMIR

The Lidarwat. Note the Himalayan spruces which sometimes attain a height of over 150 feet. Up the valley, past the snow, is a route crossing a pass to the Sind Valley.

Tarns & Torrents

river, into long stretches of terraced rice-fields. The rich, bright green, too, of the walnut foliage and the springing crops, contrast with the deep violet background of the fir forest, with its scarps of pink rock and its pale grey snow-streaked summits. The main roads which lead up the valley on either side of the river pass round the foot of the spurs. That on the left bank is the more frequented, as it is open to motor traffic. Leaving the River Jhelum at Islámabad, the path skirts the north-west side of a great plateau, with raised beaches and glacier-ground sands. It then follows the left bank of the Lidar river, passing within 2 miles of the famous temple of Martand. It then runs through Báwan, with its sacred tanks and grove of fine old chenar trees, past the limestone cliffs and caves of Bhaumjoo, and 12 miles further on the picturesque shrines of Eish-makám.

Beyond this, the valley soon becomes narrower, and the river is pent up between its steep banks and becomes a roaring torrent, making its way with a rapid fall down a channel full of obstructing boulders, among which it is churned into foam.

Pahlgám, a favourite hill station for visitors who flock to Kashmir in the summer to escape the heat of the Plains, lies at the upper end of this gorge, in a wide valley at the confluence of two streams—the Lidar and Tánin rivers. Mt. Kolahoi is the culminating point of the great mountain mass which separates these two.

Shisha Nág, which is one of the most beautiful of the mountain lakes, is about 16 miles beyond Pahlgám, and well worth a visit. The route lies up the Tánin Valley. For the last few miles after

Springs & Pixies

ascending the steep slopes of Mt. Pisu, it passes through a beautiful green valley with gentians, alpine irises and wild wallflowers in profusion. In these upland valleys it may sometimes be noticed that many of the smaller slabs of rock have been turned over—the work of bruin, searching for grubs. On one occasion at this place I saw a very fine red bear with cubs slowly walking along the hillside quite near. The final approach to Shisha Nág is up over moraine slopes. The lake then lies before us—a stretch of water 2 miles long. The exquisite pale blue colour, similar to that of the Lake of Lucerne, is due to the slight opalescence of the water from the presence of fine glacier dust in suspension. A line of peaks, of fantastic shape, rises above the lake on the right; and their snow slopes extend steeply down to the water's edge, where there are ice cliffs, from which masses become detached and float about like small icebergs.

Pahlgám is an excellent centre for expeditions. From here a charming little path leads along the side of the Lidar river, through fir forest and glade to the verdant slopes and pine woods of Aru. From this place there are delightful scrambles—up to the glacier lakes, fed by the glaciers of Mt. Kolahoi. Or the tourist may pursue his way up the Lidar Valley, through a most beautiful district known as the Lidarwat. The scenery here is wild, the valley narrow, the fir trees lofty and above tower beetling cliffs. The source of the river—an ice cavern in the snout of the Kolahoi glacier—is now quite near, also a fine waterfall at the point where the river bends abruptly from a western to a southerly course.

Tarns & Torrents

From Lidarwat there is an interesting route over the pass to the Sind Valley. This little path leaves the mountain tarns, Mar Sar and Tar Sar, some distance away on the left, but goes close by two little lakes, Khem Sar and Yem Sar.

The upper part of the Sind Valley is one of the finest and most magnificent pieces of scenery in the world. The valley becomes narrow with sheer precipices on either side and the Sind river, hemmed in and falling steeply, becomes a roaring, foaming torrent. As we emerge from the gorge, we come in sight of the beautiful glacier Valley of Sonamarg. The Marg consists of a series of crescentic terraces and ridges, the outer of which are a mile across. These are the successive terminal moraines of the immense glacier which once filled the side valley above. But the boulders and rocks have become clothed with firs and pines. And between the curved ridges there are now grassy meadows, spangled with alpine flowers. In their consecutive seasons these present varying sheets of colour—now a blaze of golden ragwort or bright orange-coloured wallflower—in a few weeks' time mantled with pink balsams or gloriously blue borage and forget-me-nots. The higher slopes are carpeted with wild strawberries, and white, mauve and yellow anemones. Some of the hollows are bright with rose primulas and blue gentians, while slopes above are clothed with bushes of alpine rose. Here and there clumps of a white orchid (*Cypripedium macranthera*) are found.

The swiftly rushing stream is overhung by grey rocks, half masked by moss and ferns, jutting through the dark masses of firs.

Springs & Pixies

“Thy giant brood of pines around thee clinging,
Children of older time, in whose devotion
The chainless winds still come and ever came
To drink their odours, and their mighty swinging
To hear—an old and solemn harmony.”—SHELLEY.

Above the crests of forest-clad ridge are stretches of pale green birchwood and clinging bushes of pink rhododendron.

From Sonamarg very delightful expeditions may be made. Those fond of mountaineering may visit the glaciers, or climb the precipitous Grey Peak; or following up the glacier stream they may ascend the steep snow slopes to the watershed and obtain a magnificent view of the Harbagwán and Kolahoi Peaks. Passing between two sapphire-coloured lakes and over the lower margin of a small glacier they may reach the edge of the heights overlooking the Lidar Valley, and peer down into the depths below, with the glory of the Matterhorn-like peak of Kolahoi, its glaciers and its formidable arêtes revealed to them across the valley. And far below, through a veil of light fleecy cloud, they obtain glimpses of green slopes and tree-clad heights slanting down to a valley gay with alpine flowers scattered amongst the boulders and broken rocks.

High up amongst the mountains, often in close relation to glaciers, there are very numerous lakes and tarns. Of these the three most beautiful are Kónsa Nág, Shisha Nág and Gangabál.

Kónsa Nág nestles at the base of the Brahma Peaks at the south-east end of the Pir Panjál Range. It is a glacier-fed, blue lake 3 miles long, and is the source of the Veshau river, a tributary of the Jhelum. The ascent to Kónsa Nág is made



THE GLACIER VALLEY SONAMARG

There are five glaciers in this valley. It is one of the most beautiful spots in the world. The peaks tower up to a height of over a mile above the torrent.

Tarns & Torrents

from near Shupeyon, up a long valley past the Haribal Falls. The final climb is for 300 feet up a grass-covered moraine. The lake then comes into view, lying in a hollow on the south side of the three peaks whose graceful conical forms, the lower shoulders of which are mantled with perpetual snow, tower up to a height of 15,500 feet.

Ganga Lake, or as it is usually called, Gangabál, lies at the foot of Mt. Haramouk. As its name implies (Ganga=Ganges) it is regarded by the Hindus as a most sacred place. Hither every year there is a large pilgrimage of Kashmiri Hindus, who bring with them fragments of bone which have escaped destruction in cremation. These relics of their deceased relatives they cast into the green waters of the lake. The lake is 3 miles long. Above it, on the west, towers up the great Haramouk massif. From the base of the eastern Peak there is a fan-shaped slope of grass-grown detritus about half a mile long, which shelves down to the shores of the lake. Above this are 2,000 feet of polished, rounded cliffs, stretching across the face of the mountain and supporting deeply fissured pale blue ice cliffs of an extensive glacier. This rests at the foot of dark, snow-streaked precipices, which in turn are crowned by the corniced snowy cap which forms the summit of the mountain. The north end of the lake is equally impressive. It is almost overhung, on the west side, by an extensive glacier about a mile across, the further end of which comes down to about 100 yards from the water's edge. Above this are 1,000 feet of séracs and then the first ice-field stretching across in two gentle curves. Still higher, ice-falls, séracs and crevasses are piled

Springs & Pixies

up for another 2,000 feet ; and hemming them in on either side and also forming a central partition are towering crags stained red and yellow by lichens and rising in successive tiers till they reach and uphold the snowfield above.

From the snout of the glacier, falling down the precipices below, are streaks of foaming white water, which, lower down, wind, like streams of milk, through steep slopes of grey débris to the lake. Further round to the right are long rock-strewn, juniper clothed slopes descending from a serrated rocky ridge and these are traversed by a tumultuous rivulet which flows down from a little tarn, 1,000 feet higher up, and to the north, named Lool Gool. At its south-eastern end, Gangabál Lake is shut in by moraine. Five distinct crescents can be made out. That which forms the actual margin and bank of the lake is a mere embankment 10 or 12 feet high, with a gap of 60 yards, through which a broad shallow stream flows out of the lake amongst large boulders. This catches the light and its sparkling, rippling surface makes a sharp contrast with the green colour of the lake beyond. To the south of this stream there are higher ridges of moraine, one of which forms a low hill which stands 200 feet above lake level.

The colour of Gangabál is superb. At our first glimpse from some neighbouring height it appears turquoise blue with broad masses of violet shadow lying across it. But at the northern end there is a streak of pure liquid emerald green. Later on in the day, according to whether sunshine or cloud, calm or wind prevail, its waters pass through every shade of green. Thus the whole lake may be pale

Tarns & Torrents

green, intersected by dark green bands. Equally beautiful is its appearance when it becomes a deep blue-green, but with lines of pale *eau-de-nil* lying across it. Sometimes, like a mirror, it reflects all the details of its mountain environment. More often, while still retaining its exquisite colour, a delicate surface vibration throws the reflections into vertical masses of light and shade as seen on the face of the water. In the evening the colour gradually deepens from pale to dark green, and dark green to violet, grey or indigo-purple while long, horizontal lines and sheets of high light rest upon it.

Clouds suspended a few hundred feet above the water intensify the mystery as we look into the fairy-cave-like shadow below and seek to penetrate its hidden recesses.

“ . . . Does the bright arch of rainbow clouds,
And pendent mountains seen in the calm lake
Lead only to a black and watery depth? ”—SHELLEY.

The rocks around are trap and of a pinkish colour. Many of them are veined or spotted with quartz. Along the shore, in the few places where it is shallow, the boulders beneath impart a russet hue to the water. Sheets of golden-yellow marsh buttercups brighten the dark reddish-brown peaty soil of the meadows on either side of the outlet of the lake. Round the shores we see the pretty little white-capped redstart and the yellow wagtail. The lark, too, may often be seen to drop suddenly into the rich green herbage and luxuriant alpine blossoms.

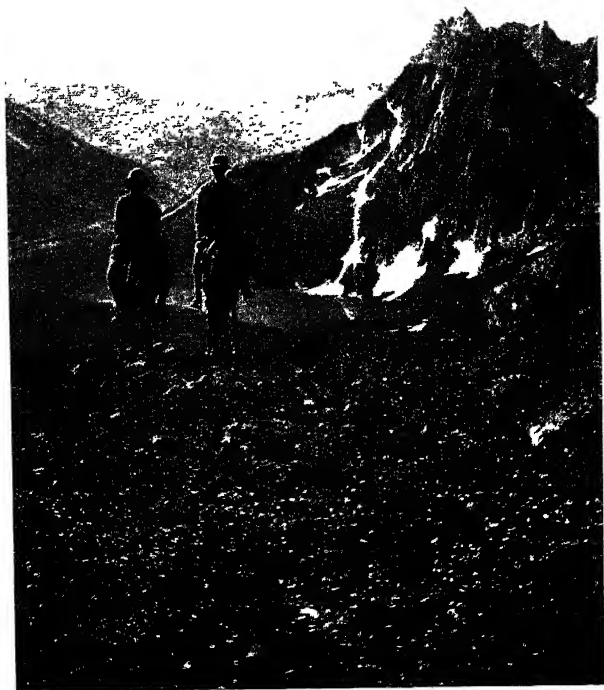
CHAPTER XIII
WILD FLOWERS

“ Behold, Spring sweeps over the world again,
Shedding soft dews from her aetherial wings ;
Flowers on the mountains, fruits over the plain
And music on the waves and woods she flings,
And love on all that lives, and calm on lifeless things.”

SHELLEY.

THE wild roses of Kashmir are very beautiful. One charming variety is the *Rosa moschata*, with delicious scent and long, rambling stems covered with thousands of cream-coloured blossoms. Whole hedges of these mingle with jasmine and clematis. This rose is a wonderful tree climber and may attain a height of 30 feet. The double yellow rose, a very characteristic Kashmir flower, also grows in hedges. There are many varieties of single red rose. Some grow, as low, isolated bushes, on the mountain slopes, bathed in sunshine and bursting into sprays or rounded surfaces of glowing colour. Others throw out long trailing branches laden with fragrant flowers, or later on, brilliant scarlet hips. The *Rosa Webbiana* is upright and straight, with rich, rosy pink flowers crowning the summit. The *Rosa macrophylla* has large leaves and carmine-coloured petals. Others are found in tangled hedgerows, together with the blackberry and the snowy blossom of the whitethorn.

If Japanese irises are famous, those of Kashmir



A HIGH PASS

2,000 feet below is the beautiful turquoise-blue Vishn Sar Lake. The peaks behind are over 16,000 feet, & the foreground, which is the top of the pass, is 13,700 feet.

Wild Flowers

should be still more so. All along the roadsides, on patches of waste land and on the banks of the river, the dwarf mauve *Iris ensata* is very abundant in the spring. Masses of it, seen from a distance, often closely resemble sheets of blue water. The tall purple, the mauve and white iris are to be found everywhere, on banks and knolls, on the hillsides, on the old graveyards, and even, looking most picturesque, on the earth-covered roofs of mosques and houses. Here and there, in the midst of the soft velvety turf, are groups, the fragrance of which mingles with that of the May bushes in full blossom.

The crown imperial lily grows all over Kashmir up to a height of 1,000 feet above the valley. It is a gorgeous flower, with its crest of five orange-red hanging bells surmounting its vivid green leaves. Even more brilliant is the scarlet tulip. This is found especially in the vicinity of the Moghul Gardens. The flowers attain a great size and rival the very best Dutch tulips. These are also sometimes seen on the roofs and form remarkable masses of colour.

On the slopes at the base of the mountains, the changing seasons bring a succession of blossoms. Earliest of all is the little white and crimson anemone. After this, small yellow crocuses and striped red and white tulips appear. Scattered about and mixed with the wild briars are little rounded bushes of cotoneaster, with dainty white blossoms and the under surface of the leaves light coloured. There are knolls and whole banks covered with "Close bit thyme, that smells like dawn in Paradise." Spikes of mauve salvia and the stately mullein, with its tall stalk and long line of lemon yellow flowers and its thick, downy leaves

Wild Flowers

are conspicuous in places. Clumps of red sorrel are very abundant and they contribute more to the general colour of the hillside than any other flowers. In the summer and autumn, the ants are always very busy gathering heaps of their tiny petals at the entrances to their nests. Here and there are bushes of wild plum (*Prunus prostrata*) with a profusion of pink blossom.

The flowers of the outlying and tributary valleys of Kashmir vary greatly with altitude and also as the result of the extensive grazing of tens of thousands of sheep and goats.

Where the fields are protected by fences and on the little strips of land between the rice fields, flowers grow in great profusion. There may be absolute thickets of balsams, especially the pink and yellow varieties, cream coloured scabious and pink mallow, with a carpet below of wild strawberry, crimson lychnis and white silene.

Leaving the Valley of Kashmir and following perhaps the course of one of the tributary streams we gradually ascend. The hillside above may be pink with wild indigo, which at a distance produces the effect of heather. Here also may be seen the golden-balled berberry, bright yellow broom and the hanging panicles of the wild wisteria. We pass along lanes bordered by witch hazel, hawthorn, honeysuckle and jasmine, with its sprays of yellow blossom. On these Himalayan hillsides, Scott's familiar lines find even fuller interpretation than in the homeland :-

“Nature scattered free and wild
Each plant and flower the mountain's child ;
Here eglantine perfumed the air,
Hawthorn and hazel mingled there.”

Wild Flowers

A very common shrub, flowering very early in the year, and producing delicate wax-like flowers on bare stalks, is the *Viburnum foetens*. This forms indeed the chief undergrowth at the margins of the great forests. Out in the open, on the sunny slopes, troops of stately eremurus may be seen. The tall spikes rise to a height of 4 or 5 feet, the upper half of which is a mass of delicate cream-coloured flower, with yellow stamens and fragrant odour which attracts the bees; for there a subdued humming pervades the air. Kashmir has given its name to a very beautiful delphinium—a tall branching plant with exquisite cobalt blue flowers.

Presently the traveller enters the forest. Here the rich soil and the moisture favour the growth of some very charming flowers. Of these perhaps the most beautiful is the columbine, tall and graceful, with rounded, but beautifully-balanced, feathery foliage, cream-coloured sepals and mauve petals prolonged into long and elegant spurs. Early in the year, many of the woods are full of white single peonies, the large cup-shaped blossom of which crowns its spreading foliage. Near by may be seen the podophyllum, a single digitate leaf with, resting on its upper surface, a solitary white flower like a Christmas rose. Later on this is succeeded by a bright red oval seed pod an inch or more long. Some of the banks are covered by a small bright green laurel with red berries. There is also a handsome purple delphinium with spreading leaves. The ground is carpeted with the little white wood sorrel. A beautiful flower which is abundant in the forest is the Jacob's ladder (*Polemonium*

Wild Flowers

coeruleum) with fern-like leaves and a line of sky-blue flowers with yellow stamens. A cream-coloured spotted tiger-lily (*Lilium polyphyllum*) is occasionally seen in small groups. It has very long stamens and the points of its petals are curled back. It is most fragrant and very similar to the familiar Turk's cap lily of Switzerland.

In between the trunks of the firs there is a dense undergrowth of white and yellow balsams, wild pansy (*Viola bicolor*), troops of dog violets and strawberry blossom with here and there a graceful spirea 3 or 4 feet in height. At the sides of the streams and in moist places under rocks and shrubs the maidenhair fern (*Adiantum venustum*) grows luxuriantly. The *Adiantum niger* is also common. More rarely, and usually with its roots near water, we see the elegant *Pteris pellucida*, a most graceful fern with long, narrow, tape-like fronds radiating from a central stalk.

It is in the Alpine regions of Kashmir that we find the most distinctive flowers. Following a narrow footpath through the forest we suddenly emerge on a marg—a stretch of flowery meadow, sloping down to a little stream. There may be a vista of turfy slopes and rolling downs extending for miles, bordered by the dark firs and with, here and there, groups of magnificent pines. In places there are pools, reflecting the blue sky. Herds of water buffalo or flocks of sheep may be visible. On raised ground, in some shady recess, the flat topped huts of a little colony of herdsmen (gujars) may be seen. These people are not Kashmiris. They have come from the other side of the Pir Panjál range. Tall and sallow, with sonorous voices and Semitic



A GUJAR FAMILY

These hill people have large herds of buffaloes & goats. In the winter they live in flat-topped houses on cultivated clearings at the edge of the forest. In the summer they migrate to high upland valleys.

Wild Flowers

features they adopt a distinctive dress and talk a Panjábi dialect. They are clothed in dark blue. The women wear baggy pyjamas, dark blue, with vertical red stripes. The children are often pretty and attractive. Their little caps and coats are decorated with mother-o'-pearl buttons stitched on in patterns.

Leaving this marg and still ascending through another belt of firs some miles broad, we eventually reach the upper level where firs are replaced by birches. Here some of the most beautiful scenery in Kashmir is to be found. The forest is below. A line of margs extends along the mountain side with birch-clad slopes and the snows quite near. Here there are clumps of rhododendrons with pink flowers and dark green shiny leaves, tawny below. Higher still is the *Rhododendron anthopogon*, a small shrub with cream-coloured flowers. This is the Kashmiri alpine rose.

Wherever we look we are filled with wonder and admiration. Sometimes, near a rippling stream, we see a sheet of the charming *Primula rosea*. Round the peaty pools, in the vicinity, the ground for hundreds of yards may be crimson with closely-growing *Pedicularis siphonantha*. On little islands in mid stream, or on the banks, the bright yellow *Corydalis Falconeri*, with its pale green fimbriated foliage, is very conspicuous. Near the dense little juniper bushes and standing out against the dark background is its cousin, the *Corydalis Kashmeriana*, which has a peculiar tint of brilliant pale blue which is quite unique. The ground around is dotted with anemones, sulphur-coloured, mauve and white. On grassy rocky mountain slopes there is also the

Wild Flowers

very handsome *Anemone tetrasepale*, 2 feet high with a crown of white blossom on a leafy stalk. In moist places the *Primula denticulata* is abundant with its lilac-coloured balls of blossom. There is another beautiful primula (*Stuartii*) with rich purple blossoms, whitish stalk and obverse to its lanceolate leaves. Two particularly beautiful flowers which we find immediately below the melting snow, are the *Trollius acaulis*, orange-yellow with pentagonal corolla and delicately-veined petals; and the *Adonis chrysocyathus*, which is like a large double dwarf yellow anemone. Edelweiss is extremely common and very fine specimens may be easily obtained. On sunny slopes, between cliff and river, the large white *Anemone rupicola* may be found with flowers nearly 3 inches across, and there are many gentians. Higher up among the crags wild rhubarb grows in quantities, and actually on the rocks we often see one of the daintiest of all flowers, the *Isopyrum grandiflorum*, a group of white, prettily-pencilled little cups rather like anemones, but more delicate. Many, too, are the varieties of saxifrage, sedum and ranunculus. Two very pretty dwarf mauve and lilac irises (*Iris Kumaonensis*) call for special mention. The amber-coloured wild wall-flower (*Erysimum altaicum*) must not be forgotten, for it contributes greatly to the brilliancy of colour of these alpine slopes as do also the golden potentillas which sway in the breeze. Many of the knolls, even at this height of between 11,000 and 12,000 feet, are clothed with forget-me-nots. There are often acres of a beautiful dark blue borage (*Lindelia spectabilis*). Contrasting with these lovely blue flowers are the fine yellow calceolaria-like



VIEW FROM THE DAL DARWÁZA

This is the entrance to the Dal Lake. Note the doonga house-boat in the foreground, & other larger house-boats on the left. In the middle distance, in the rapidly flowing stream, washermen are busy plying their task.

Wild Flowers

Pedicularis bicornuta. Among the tumbled masses of moraine, too, we may find the charming blue poppy, Queen of Kashmir wild flowers. Finally as we climb higher and reach an altitude of 15,000 feet above sea level, when all the other flowers have disappeared, we find a curious woolly-leaved, globular, hairy flower. This is the great saussurea (*Saussurea sacra*). It is like a globe of white velvet, the size of a cricket ball, the contour studded with violet blossoms, each about half an inch across and which project slightly from the surface. The whole rests in the centre of a rosette of foliage. This plant is greatly prized by the people who make an infusion from it and call it the king of medicines.

It is only quite recently that the importance of Kashmir as a source of medicinal plants has been recognized. Amongst these may be mentioned belladonna, hyoscyamus, aconite, podophyllum, rhubarb, gentian, artemesia, chiretta, violets, and there are various others. One of the most interesting plants, also a *Saussurea* (*lappa*) is the Kot or Chinese incense plant, which grows in the forests. It looks rather like a very dark thistle and its root is a most valuable article of export. Many Kashmiri wild flowers have no English names, so it is not easy to enumerate them. The country is so exceedingly rich in flowers that it has been possible only to refer to some of the more beautiful, more abundant, or more characteristic of them.

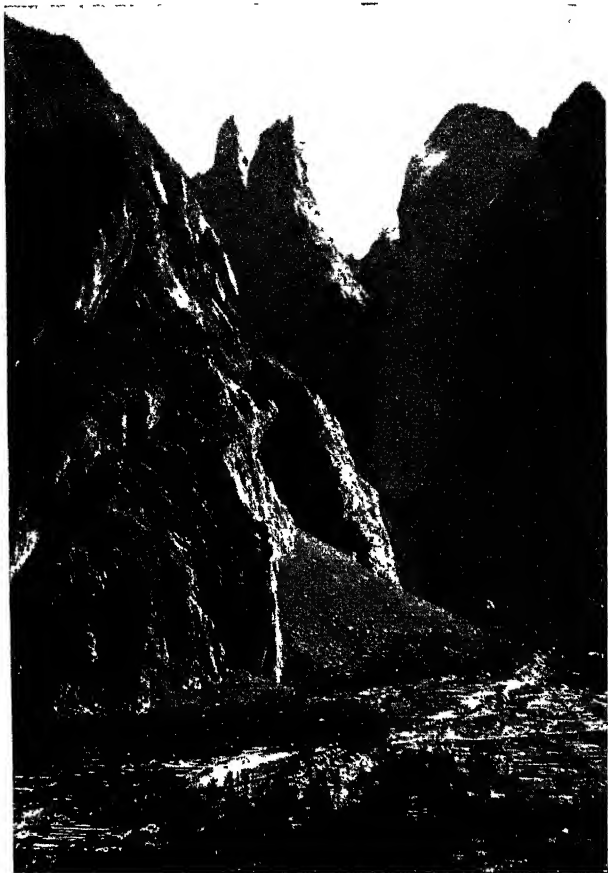
CHAPTER XIV

MOUNTAIN PEAKS & GLACIERS

THE clouds which drift over the plains of India towards Kashmir are first arrested by the Pir Panjál range. After a greater or smaller fall of snow or rain, according to the time of the year, they cross the Valley of Kashmir and are again arrested by the northern chain of mountains, which forms the second line of defence, against snow or rain, to the dry upland deserts of Little Tibet.

There are many places in Kashmir from which the spectator sees an absolute circle of snow-clad mountains. It is the melting of this snow, during the summer, which is of such inestimable value to the cultivators, for from it the streams and canals are filled, which distribute the water to the rice fields, which supply the staple food of the people.

The Pir Panjál range which separates Kashmir from the plains of India is a beautiful chain of mountains with here and there lakes and glaciers. The highest peaks are Mt. Tatticooti (15,524 feet), Sunset Peak, and the Brahma Peaks. These are all about the same height. Mt. Tatticooti can be easily identified, as, looking from the Kashmir Valley, the right side of the mountain has what looks like gigantic steps, and a little further to the west there is a deep cleft in the ridge as if it had been cut vertically with a colossal axe. This peak was



SPIRES OF SALTORO GORGE

A most impressive piece of mountain scenery in the Shayok Valley Baltistan, north of the Indus. This wonderful gorge, with its sheer granite cliffs & spires, leads up to the Bilaphond & immense Siachen glacier.

Mountain Peaks & Glaciers

climbed by the author some years ago. The previous evening we slept in a shelter tent at a height of 12,850 feet. Next morning, crossing the south-eastern arête, we were compelled to descend 300 feet to a snowfield covering the eastern glacier. Walking across this we climbed a broad couloir stretching up 600 feet to the north-eastern arête. At the top was a cornice of snow with 5 feet edge towards us. On the opposite side a very sharp snow incline extended straight away down for 1,000 or 2,000 feet to a glacier. From the point where we stood, a broken and steep rocky ridge stretched up for more than 2,000 feet towards the summit. Following this, and occasionally traversing snow couloirs, we eventually reached the top. This was the first ascent of Mt. Tatticooti.

There are many interesting climbs of this kind. Indeed Kashmir is a delightful field for the Alpine climber. It is by no means the highest Himalayan peaks which give most interest, because those are mostly covered by snow and the ascent resolves itself into "slogging" up snow slopes of greater or less degrees of steepness. The charm of the peaks, in the range more immediately encircling the Valley of Kashmir, is their form and that on them there is variety for the climber—snow, glacier and rock.

Beautiful though the southern chain of mountains undoubtedly is, it cannot rival the grandeur of the range to the north. Here the great Indus river curves round the frontier from east to west, traversing large areas of Kashmir territory. Even on its southern side there are many peaks, which are higher than any in Switzerland. Bordering the Valley of Kashmir to the north-east, there is a range of great

Mountain Peaks & Glaciers

interest and beauty. Owing to its proximity it may be regarded as more definitely Kashmiri than the mountains to the north of the Indus, and its chief summits can be seen from many parts of the valley. Haramouk (16,900 feet) dominates the Wular Lake, and it is one of the most impressive of all because it is relatively near. The summit is of great beauty. A great snowfield is surrounded, like a coronet, by a series of elevations—some of them jagged peaks and others snowy domes. The eastern peak is the highest. It was climbed by the author in 1899. A few days later, when camped near Gangabál Lake, at the foot of the precipitous eastern face of the mountain, I was talking to one of the nomadic herdsmen, who bring their flocks in summer to these heights. Pointing to the summit, I mentioned that, a few days previously, I had been on it. "Never," he said. "You have never been there. It is fairy land."

Kotwál (14,211 feet) is comparatively near to Srinagar. Its name signifies "The guardian." The summit is rounded in contour and rocky. To the south it has a pointed snow-capped peak. Another mountain, which rises above the north-east end of the Dal Lake is Mahadeo (13,013 feet). It makes a beautiful background to the Shalimar garden. It can be easily climbed from Srinagar and this makes a very pleasant expedition with two or three days in camp.

Two other peaks which are visible from the valley towards the east are Mt. Kolahoi (17,827) and Nun Kun (23,000 feet). The former is quite one of the most interesting of the peaks of Kashmir because of its shape, which is somewhat similar to that of the



MT. KOLAHOI

One of the most interesting peaks in Kashmir. Surrounded by glaciers it rises from an extensive snowfield seamed by crevasses & bergschrunds with wonderful ice cliffs. The first ascent was made by the author & Major Kenneth Mason, R.F., in 1912.

Mountain Peaks & Glaciers

Matterhorn—a pointed, jagged, rocky summit rising 3,000 feet from a great field of snow-covered glacier, which itself is as high as Mont Blanc. This snowfield occupies an area of 2 square miles. In many places there are crevasses and ice cliffs. On three sides of the peak there are tumbled séracs. The Kolahoi massif is situated at the head of the Lidar Valley. There are two peaks. The southern and part of the northern can be seen from Pahlgám, the popular hill station. The ascent can be made by placing a base camp on the snowfield; but it is an arduous climb, sensational in places, although not presenting any serious technical difficulty.

Nun Kun (23,000 feet) is another mountain giant. Several attempts, by Arthur Neve and others, have been made to reach the summit. Dr. and Mrs. Bullock Workman succeeded in reaching a very high point, not far from the top, and they published a very interesting and beautifully illustrated volume recounting their experiences.

Climbing in the Kashmir Himalayas is very different to that in Switzerland. As a general rule the technical difficulties are not great. With the exception of Mt. Kolahoi, the last 3,000 feet of which is chiefly mixed rock and couloir climbing, the higher mountains are so completely snow-covered that the final ascent is from glaciers up snow slopes of a greater or less degree of steepness. Careful organization is required, so as to place the final camp within climbing distance of the top. Breathlessness and impaired energy are of course the handicap of high altitudes. The difficulties are indeed just the same as those experienced, to a greater extent, by the Mt. Everest expeditions.

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Avalanches are neither so frequent nor so dangerous as in the Swiss mountains. This is owing to the great sun heat which, by the month of June, has already melted immense masses. On the higher peaks there is, however, real danger. The climber is seldom in their close vicinity without hearing, ever and anon, the roar of some small avalanche. In the spring the upper valleys suffer greatly. Immense avalanches occur. On one occasion, in the Sind Valley, I saw an avalanche so colossal that the blast of air, driven before it, snapped off trees with a girth of 3 feet and blew the roof off a house a quarter of a mile away. At another point in the same valley, after an unusually heavy snowfall, a massive avalanche descended, crossed the river, which here flows 200 feet below the valley level, and, on reaching the opposite side it was deflected by a slope to a right angle, and overwhelmed a village which had hitherto been thought to be out of any possible line of danger.

In the upper Wardwan Valley, close to Nun Kun, a disaster occurred which should be a warning to sportsmen who visit Kashmir in the spring. A young officer, on the march to the Bot Kol glacier, pitched his camp in what appeared to be a perfectly safe spot. In the night an avalanche descended and swept right up and over a ridge, which had appeared to afford absolute security, and engulfed the camp. The pity of it was, that the tent pole was actually found, by a rescue party, to be projecting from the surface. If the inmate had only known he might have cut his way out. He was found dead.

The village of Bandipura, at the north-east corner of the Wular Lake, is the starting point for Gilgit

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and the north. We pass through Trágbal, a charming meadow (9,160 feet), embedded in pine forests with wonderful views of Haramouk, the Wular Lake and the Pir Panjál range. Crossing the Rajdiangan Pass (11,900 feet) we descend into the Kishenganga Valley and reach Gurais next day. This is a pleasant hill centre which attracts some visitors. One march beyond Gurais is the Kamri Pass, approached up a long slope clothed with glorious alpine flowers. From the top of the pass there is an impressive view of Nanga Parbat (26,669 feet), the culminating point of the Kashmir ranges, and in some respects the grandest mountain in the world. Some years ago this was the scene of a tragedy. Mummery, a distinguished alpine climber, leaving the rest of his party, endeavoured to cross one of the snowy spurs. He failed to arrive at the rendezvous. The other members of the expedition, deeply anxious, retraced their steps and tried to follow his route. But a sharp snowfall had obliterated all traces of the adventurous climber; and his fate, like that of the intrepid climbers of Mt. Everest, is involved in mystery.

Two marches beyond Gurais, in the main valley, we reach the foot of the Burzil Pass, with, to our right, the great Deosai Plateau (13,500 feet). The deep winter snow lingers on, and this is difficult to traverse until the summer is well advanced. It takes three days to cross this tableland with its flowery slopes and deep violet coloured streams, swarming with snow trout. We then ascend the Burji La Pass (15,900 feet). It is from here that we obtain perhaps the most magnificent mountain view in the world. We look across the Indus river and

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see stretching before us a marvellous panorama of some of the highest peaks in the Himalayas. We are looking at a mountainous region much of which has remained unexplored. We are gazing at peaks, most of which have never been ascended, and many of which are unclimbable. This part of the Himalayas has exercised powerful attraction on a whole series of mountaineers and explorers—British, Italian, American and Dutch. Francis Younghusband, Conway, the Duke of the Abruzzi, the Duke of Spoleto, the Bullock Workmans, the Vissers, Kenneth Mason, Longstaff, Arthur Neve and many others have gone and seen and, recounting their experiences and observations, they have added to our knowledge of the topography and glaciology. Facing us is Mt. Godwin Austen (K2) (28,200 feet), Gwasherbrum, Masherbrum and Bride Peak. At the foot of the range, at the head of the Shigar Valley and extending eastward is the magnificent Baltoro glacier, towering above which there are four peaks over 26,000 feet in height. Facing us are vast fields of eternal snow and other immense stretches of glacier such as the Bilaphond and Siachen.

These Himalayan fastnesses both north and south of the Indus are the sportsman's paradise. Black and red bear, stag, ibex, markhor, and various types of wild sheep and goats abound.

CHAPTER XV

A GLIMPSE OF KASHMIRI TIBET

IN the streets of Srinagar sometimes we pass a picturesque group of people of Mongolian type. They are clad in long coats of a grey woollen material, with broad girdles of blue or red and caps of various colours—red, blue, green, or even of black velvet—with red lining. They have high cheek bones and wear their hair in long queues, which make their backs greasy and black. These have come from Kashmiri Tibet.

Both geographically and ethnologically the real boundary between Kashmir and Tibet is in Kashmir territory. In the eighth century Kashmir was a tributary of China and paid annual tribute. The term Little Poliu, in Chinese annals, corresponds with the Little Tibet of modern geography and is part of Kashmir. The contrast between this and the rest of Kashmir is great. The Sind is a valley with fertile fields, green pastures, luxuriant herbage and magnificent forests. We cross the Zoji pass, 11,200 feet above sea level, and soon pass the watershed. The drainage is now into the upper reaches of the Indus. There is an abrupt change in the scenery. Trees are now scarce. There are no longer firs and pines. Even the scattered birch trees, which persist for a while, disappear as the slopes become more and more

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arid. Travelling east we soon enter a rainless region. No cultivation is possible except where a stream, fed by the melting snows on the heights above, waters some fan-shaped area. Here there is an oasis. Here there are terraced fields with the fresh green of growing barley and of buckwheat with its white blossom and masses of oval leaves. Here, too, there are clusters of little flat-roofed houses with rough stone walls. Little rivulets of sparkling water cross the path and bushes of wild rose with brilliant red blossom add to the attractiveness of the scene. It is after passing Kargyl which is ten days' march from Srinagar, that we enter Buddhist Tibet. Up to this point the sparse population has been mixed and Mahammedanism has predominated. In the valleys around Dras there is a Dard element. Here, both in stature and features, the people are quite different from those of Mongolian origin. Some of them may even be of Greek descent. In Kargyl there is a strong Tibetan element; but, owing chiefly to inter-marriage, Islam has made steady progress. Beyond Kargyl we see, in places, signs of a still earlier religion of animistic type. Here and there on the hillside stands a solitary altar "to the unknown God," decorated with strips of white and coloured rag. The scanty population is very hardy. Women are in the minority. Their costume is singular. Head dresses of red cloth closely studded with turquoises and brooches cover also the neck and back; and they are balanced on either side by large ear flaps of black lambs' wool. The poorer women wear long and thick black coats and pyjamas. The well-to-do have richly-coloured stuff or silk skirts.

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Elaborate necklaces of silver and red coral beads are worn, and a section of some large marine shell is worn like a cuff on each wrist. Long cloaks of goatskin complete the costume. Whereas, in the Valley of Kashmir, polygamy exists to some limited extent, here the opposite is the custom and polyandry is still prevalent.

Our path sometimes lies by the side of a rapid river laden with silt. Churned into foam it makes its way amongst immense boulders or is narrowed and hemmed in by cliffs. In places the rocks are of a brilliant hue—deep red or purple—and so highly polished as to look as if they had been varnished. This may be due to the action of fine sand driven by the high wind which invariably arises in the afternoon and blows with great force down the valleys.

These rocks sometimes bear inscriptions or drawings. The ibex is a favourite subject, or the Buddhist sacred sentence, *Om mane padme hom*. One stone close to the Khalatze fort, where a bridge crosses the Indus, has a rough drawing of a tiger chasing some smaller animal and an inscription which I photographed and sent to Calcutta. When deciphered it was found to record the fact that at this place in 200 B.C. there was a customs' post. Perhaps the tiger was meant to represent the customs' officer!

The monasteries of Shergol and Moulbe are the nearest outposts of Buddhism in Kashmir. As a general rule these lámaseras are built on the summit or slopes of some outstanding mountain spur. Moulbe is most interesting. The monastery is on top of a pointed hill some hundreds of feet above the road. Here also by the roadside there is a very

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notable image of Buddha 40 feet high, beautifully carved out of the solid rock.

Beyond Moulbe we cross the Namiki and Fotu La, two lofty passes each a little over 13,000 feet. We are now only a short distance from the upper Indus Valley which here is 9,500 feet above sea level.

Lámoyoro, at the foot of and beyond the Fotu La Pass, is an extraordinary place. Here there is an extensive deposit of lacustrine clay of great geological interest. It extends over a large area and is fissured and crevassed like a glacier. But the central point of attraction in Lámoyoro is the monastery. The position of this is quite unique. The mountains in the background are snow-capped and imposing. The valley is narrow and deep, culminating below in a very remarkable gorge, the lofty precipitous sides of which are so near together, that the light is subdued except where, here and there, a shaft of brilliant sunshine penetrates. Above this gorge at the north side of the valley, there is a line of lofty conglomerate cliffs, the summit of which, right up to the edge, is crowned by the most impressive monastery in Kashmiri Tibet. The main pony track passes some hundreds of feet below, but the approach to this sacred spot is emphasised by long lines of chortens. These cenotaphs are a great feature in the scenery. They vary greatly in size. The largest may be 30 feet high, with a solid square base surmounted by a white dome with flattened top. From the centre of this rises a rather thick cylindrical spire or pinnacle painted red. The smaller chortens are the same shape but earth coloured, being made of clay and unpainted. Little recesses in the side of the plinth often contain



THE MONASTERY BAND AT LAMAYORO

At their worship, the monks, sitting in rows facing each other, chant, accompanied by the band with drums, cymbals & trumpets. The effect is impressive. The singing is in unison & rather like Gregorian music.

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small clay medallions stamped with the image of Buddha. These are said to be partly composed of the ashes of the Láma (priest) commemorated by the cenotaph. Stretches of broad low wall also herald the proximity of a monastery. The tops of these walls are paved with flat stones on which the Buddhist sacred sentence has been neatly carved.

A winding path leads us up to the monastery, where we are courteously received by the lámas, clothed in voluminous red robes, with bare arms and shaven heads. High officials or distinguished visitors may be welcomed with musical honours. On one of the roofs of the monastery a little group of monks may be seen, standing out on the sky line. Suddenly a deep, sonorous sound is heard. It comes from immense copper trumpets 10 feet long. These are so heavy that they rest on the ground while the performers, with marvellous lung power, produce these strange noises. The lámas are quite conversational.

Visitor. How long have you lived here?

Láma. Forty years, ever since I was a lad.

Visitor. How many monks are there here?

Láma. About fifty, but several are out in the villages collecting money and supplies.

Visitor. How do you pass your time?

Láma. In worship and meditation, and in reading the sacred writings. We read them through once every ten days. Thus we acquire great merit.

Visitor. How can you read so much in so short a time?

Láma. Each of us reads a certain number of pages. We do it all together and soon come to the end. Would you like to come to our service?

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It will take place in about half an hour's time. Meanwhile I will show you our temples.

The visitor accompanies his guide and is taken into a large and lofty, but dark, chamber. Facing the door is an image, 10 feet high, with beautifully moulded features and serene countenance. There are numerous faces. Those on its left are less pleasing and are said to be showing displeasure at the sins of men. There are numerous arms radiating outwards and hands each containing an open eye. The figure is clearly modelled on the pattern of Brahma, the Hindu creator; and Brahma's insignia, the lotus, rosary, vase and book are usually seen in representations of this deity, which is known as Chunrezig or Avalokita, "He who looks down." There are various other smaller images of incarnations of holy men and interesting frescoes on the walls. Before all these there are votive lamps filled with butter and constantly burning.

In another temple the walls are decorated with gruesome pictures of the Buddhist hell. Asking our guide what these pictures mean we are told that they depict the tortures of the damned, who are being boiled in oil, flayed alive, pitchforked into the flames, and so on !

Presently the monks troop into the temple of images and arrange themselves on either side, in two rows facing each other and sitting down. Then in a thin nasal voice some sentences are intoned and echo in the roof. Suddenly, without any warning, all the monks burst out into full-throated chorus accompanied by the band—drums, cymbals, trumpets, and clarionets. The effect is impressive and quite unique. This stops as abruptly



LAMAYORO MONASTERY

The most interesting Lamaserui in Kashmir Tibet. It is perched on a high cliff with the village nestling in the hollow below. The monks, in their picturesque robes, the Tibetan mastiff watchdogs, the tunnels & stairs & passages, the temples with brass vessels, images & frescoes, & the chortens are all fascinating.

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as it began and the silence is broken by the piping of a solitary voice succeeded once more, after a time, by the full choir with musical accompaniment.

The monastery is fascinating, with its Chinese paintings of the demons of the doorway, its winding passages, dark archways, fierce mastiffs, its lofty chortens with their red spires, its immense cylindrical prayer wheels, which the monks set in motion as they pass, its bunches of prayer flags, and its strange pinnacles on the roofs, like South Sea Islanders' totems. The site is extraordinarily commanding, with the cliffs below and the extended prospect of mountain ranges and snowy peaks.

Leh, the capital of this district which is known as Ladákh, is indeed a town set in a desert. It is 11,400 feet above sea level. It is a town of flat-topped, terraced houses built of sun-dried bricks. There is one broad street with lines of poplars and quaint two-storied houses, in the shops of which all sorts of bright-coloured garments and other goods are exposed for sale. This street is also used for polo, and exciting games are played by enthusiastic Tibetans mounted on small active country ponies. The main street is entered at the south end by a large gateway. At the other end is the steep slope of a rocky ridge with a very large chorten with its white dome and red spire. Crowning the whole and high above the town is the most conspicuous building of Leh—the palace. This is nine stories high. It took three years to build and was constructed by King Sengenamgal in the seventeenth century. On top of the hill behind the palace there is a red monastery containing a colossal image of

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Buddha, the head of which projects above the floor of the second story. This was erected by King Lde.

Far down below is the Indus river separated from the town by a great stretch of barren slope. Across the river, facing Leh, is a line of snows culminating in a peak over 20,000 feet in height. The prevailing colour of the ridges below snow level is light red. In the early morning and at sunset the play of colours is sublime. The mountains glow with shades of orange and crimson, while their shadows are often a pure liquid violet. The atmosphere of the valley is remarkably clear and transparent. The sun heat is very great. A black bulb thermometer placed in the sunshine oftens registers 25° higher at Leh than in the plains of India. It is possible to make water boil by exposing it to the sun in a black bottle placed inside a large phial of clear glass.

There is something attractive about the people. They are pleasant-mannered and of cheerful disposition. The Moravian Mission has worked here for many years and has had a very great influence for good. The best opportunity of seeing the people is at one of their great gatherings, such as that at Hemis. Every year, usually about the end of June, or early in July, there is a festival at this monastery which is two marches beyond Leh. It is the largest and most important in Ladákh although the buildings are not so interesting as those of Lá moyoro. The festival takes the form of a great dance of masked figures—commonly called a devil dance. For two days the monks, assuming extraordinary masks and rich costumes, entertain vast crowds of



ON THE DAL LAKE

A little market boat. Scores of these, laden with market garden produce, are paddled into the city daily. They are propelled & steered from the bows.

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spectators with a series of dances in slow measured rhythm. The masks are most grotesque. Some are hideous and repulsive and are meant to represent demons. Other large ones are of benevolent aspect. The show is intended to be of a religious nature and to illustrate the authority of the Lámas over the evil spirits, which they exorcise with the accompaniment of the tinkling of bells, sprinkling of holy water, and the rattle of small drums made of human skulls. Here we see the people of Ladákh, drawn not only from the town but from many a distant village. They are all arrayed in their best clothes and the women look very gay in their bright-coloured Chinese silks and turquoise-studded headgear.

12 miles behind Leh, the valley is closed in by a snowy range which is crossed by the Khardong Pass, 17,400 feet above sea level, and 6,000 feet higher than Leh. This is the route to Karakórum and Yarkand. Descending from the pass we find ourselves in the Nubra Valley of the Shayok. This fine river runs parallel with the Indus. The region to the north is still to some extent "terra incognita," although of recent years various expeditions have carried on important exploratory work. In 1928-9 this mighty river was blocked by one of the glaciers of the Karakóram range. An icy barrier, 1,200 feet thick and more than 1,000 feet wide, completely dammed up the stream and a lake was formed 9 miles long with an average depth of 130 feet. The bursting of such a barrier is apt to be attended by very far-reaching disaster, which can only be minimized, to some extent, by timely warning of all villagers and those in charge of bridges, in the track of the dreaded devastating

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inundation. Every few years the descent of the glacier blocks the river and the pent up stream finds an outlet, eventually, either over or under the wall of ice, or by a cataclysmal burst of the dam.

The Shayok joins the Indus river at Skardo. The Valley of Skardo is situated to the west of the point at which the rivers meet. Its outstanding feature is a high rocky ridge, crowned by the ruins of a castle. Round the base of this on the east side the broad and rapid Indus sweeps with a great curve. The town itself consists really of scattered groups of houses, with groves of apricots and a Dogra fort, a simple square enclosure with high walls, on a rocky eminence, and with circular towers at the four corners.

The plain of Skardo is about 5 miles broad and 20 miles long. The traveller is struck by the clearness and dryness of the atmosphere and the intensity of the sunlight. All around are steep mountain walls backed up by snow peaks. Although these mountains have little colour of their own, they are wonderfully beautiful, with a peculiar glow imparted to them by the sun. Even in the daytime there is a suggestion of pink in their colour and the shadows are mauve or pure cobalt. But when the evening begins, the slopes and precipices gradually become redder and redder. Their outlines stand out with remarkable clearness against a cloudless sky, and deep violet shadows occupy every rift and gorge.

The people of Baltistan are quite different from those of Kashmir and Ladákh. Many of them are evidently of Aryan extraction. The Dard element is in evidence. There are two distinct types. One, the better class, includes the rajahs, their families

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and relations, and is decidedly handsome. Their features are Grecian with straight noses and oval faces, usually pale, but sometimes with a little colour, the eyebrows straight or slightly arched. Many have the hair above the forehead shaved off. All of them wear the rest of their hair, which is straight and rather coarse, in long locks. The upper classes dress in white, and both men and boys are fond of decorating themselves with bright flowers, which they place in their caps or their hair. The effect is pleasing.

The peasantry are more of the Mongol type, they are spare, usually short in stature, with sallow faces and long hair. This is not done up in a queue, but hangs in a straight fringe all round, or as curling locks on either side of the head. They are pleasant mannered, gentle and patient, and they are very strong and can carry loads of 60 or more pounds for great distances. Many of them are enterprising and migrate to the Panjab. There they earn a living and make their "little pile" by doing navvy work. Some of them make the pilgrimage to Mecca. When buried their faces are turned towards the west.

At the west end of the Valley of Skardo, the mountains again close in on the Indus, which, reinforced by the Shayok, is now a mighty river descending in foaming rapids, intensified by the rocky cliffs between which it is pent. 90 miles further on, it passes through Gilgit, a military and political outpost of the Empire, not far from Hunza and Nagar, the scene of the exciting little campaign so vividly described in *Where Three Empires Meet*.

Like the rest of India, Kashmir owes a very great

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debt to Great Britain. Less than a century ago, even in these remote valleys, the din of warfare and the clash of arms were echoed by the barren hills. The conquest of Baltistan by the Dogras took place in 1841. Zoráwar Singh, the Dogra general, very nearly came to grief. He found himself on the right bank of the Indus in difficult ground and short of food. More than 4,000 of his men were cut up in an ambush. The winter set in very cold, and Zoráwar was in the utmost peril. What saved him was the construction of a bridge by a novel method. Beams were thrust out into the stream until they were encrusted with ice. From these, others, in turn, were pushed out until the Dogras were able to cross partly on ice and partly on wood. They surprised the Baltis, and inflicted heavy loss on them. It is well to remember the amenities of those good old days, the passing of which many Indian politicians affect to deplore. In the presence of the population of Skardo, the vanquished army, and the Dogra troops, the Balti leader had his right hand, his tongue, his nose and his ears cut off. He died after two days.

So far as Kashmir is concerned peace has now settled down—the Pax Britannica. All that Kashmir with its good climate, potential wealth, and the intellectual capacity of many of its people now needs, is good government with a larger measure of social, political and religious freedom.

CHAPTER XVI

SOME KASHMIRI TYPES

ALTHOUGH the territory of H.H. the Maharajah of Kashmir is seven times the size of inhabited Egypt, and almost as extensive as England, Wales and Scotland, it is, for its size, very sparsely populated. Indeed, the Province of Kashmir has a population of only about one and a half million, and of this considerably under one-half is of the female sex.

There are, of course, immense tracts in the mountainous districts which are uninhabited. In the summer, many of the upland valleys are occupied by herdsmen and shepherds. These, however, all leave the high pastures in the winter ; and a very large area of Kashmir is actually under snow for nine months in the year. Certain important routes such as those to Gilgit and Ladakh are traversed by postal runners, even in the depths of winter, and occasionally the breaking of telegraph wires necessitates the despatch of a relief party of linesmen. Both these types of Kashmiri are sturdy, well, developed men, warmly clothed in woollen cloth of local manufacture. They are often exposed to grave danger. Lives are lost from avalanches and occasionally from wild animals.

It is not until the end of June that most of the passes are free of snow, which, as it melts, is apt to disclose, along the mountain tracks, the skeletons of ponies which have perished by the wayside. I have even seen the remains of some unfortunate wayfarer who has perchance lost his life in a blizzard.

Kashmiri shepherds are a distinct class. They tend enormous flocks. Many Kashmiri villagers possess a few sheep. In the summer, when the heat in the Valley is excessive

Some Kashmiri Types

little flocks are despatched, from thousands of peasant holdings, under the charge of the shepherds, who go up to high pastures and live with their families in small tents. They are rather rough and uncouth people and not very helpful to travellers. Perhaps the points of contact are not favourable; for in remote mountainous districts, where food is scarce, they are often pressed to sell sheep and they are apt to refuse or to demand exorbitant prices. They are accountable to the villagers for all the sheep, but the supposed depredations of hypothetical or real bears and leopards are made responsible for any which they have themselves taken or disposed of. They always insist on the skin being returned to them by any purchasers. This, and perhaps the head also, are exhibited to the owners as proof that their missing sheep were killed by wild beasts!

The herdsmen or gujars are not really Kashmiris, although large numbers have settled in the uplands, where they cultivate the land at an altitude of about 6,000 feet above sea level. In the summer they take their herds of buffaloes, cows and goats up another three or four thousand feet to the high valleys, where they build little flat-topped huts. Tall, thin and of a Semitic type, they wear a distinctive dress of dark blue. Like the shepherds, they are Moslems. Some of the gujars are quite wealthy, their wealth being, however, at once reinvested in live stock. They make quantities of butter, which, after clarifying by boiling, is sold as ghee in Srinagar and India. The gujar children are pretty and attractive, but there is no provision for their education, and they spend their time in tending the cattle and goats. The mischief wrought by the goats is appalling, as they devour young trees and shrubs with voracity.

In northern Kashmir, comparatively near the border of Yágistan, there are groups of nomadic settlers who are a source of annoyance to the Kashmiri villagers, whom they terrorize. Indeed, sometimes in the jungle, a shepherd may be killed in a quarrel, or a forest guard knocked on the head by them. It is not difficult for them to invent a plausible story about having found the body at the foot of a crag. It

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is well, too, for travellers who camp out in Kashmir to remember that theft from tents at night is not infrequent.

Another type associated with the mountains is the shikarri or sportsman. Kashmir is, of course, the sportsman's paradise. Every year, many young British officers on leave, and others, go far afield in the Himalayas in search of large game. The shikarri is a villager who has developed an aptitude for discovering the haunts of such game as bear, stag, ibex, etc. He is a good type of Kashmiri, stalwart, well developed, bronzed by exposure to all weather, self-reliant and courageous. With woollen turban, tweed jacket, puttoo knickerbockers, putties and either boots or grass sandals, the shikarri is a trim workman-like figure. His sight is keen and in the early morning he will detect a herd of deer or a solitary ibex far away on the mountain-side which has escaped the observation even of an expert European sportsman. In a conversational mood he will tell you many a tale of his experiences and adventures.

There are many clans or tribes in Kashmir. The galawáns or horse-dealers live on the high pasture-land in the summer, where they are found at an altitude of eleven or twelve thousand feet, with herds of ponies, many of which have young foals. The galawáns have no good reputation. Indeed in olden days they were simply horse thieves and owing to their violence they were a source of danger to the villagers. Ever and anon, armed with thick sticks (lathis), they would raid a village, and the loot was not restricted to ponies. Many were caught and executed, in the time of the Maharajah Gulab Singh, and the rest were deported. They have, however, gradually returned, and stealing still goes on.

There are various other Kashmiri tribes—the Dums, for instance, a rather dark-skinned race, met with in the villages, where they are employed as police and watchmen.

Unlike the extensive outlying mountainous districts, the *Valley* of Kashmir is very populous. It is studded with villages, and on an average there are 150 people to every square mile. The agriculturist (zemindar) is, of course, the real backbone of Kashmir. So far as social distinctions

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exist, he holds himself superior to what are called *taifidárs*—those who are not pure farmers, for instance, the shepherds, *galawáns*, *gujars* and market gardeners. They do not intermarry with these, nor with boatmen, leather workers, minstrels or village sweepers. I have, in the chapter on village life, already described the villagers in their environment. They are cheerful people, distinctly emotional, capable of dramatic action, and with a real sense of humour.

Kashmiris in the villages are loyal to each other, but they are apt to regard a stranger as fair play. If the stranger is an official or a European, they consider it legitimate to take advantage of him to the fullest extent possible, and they are very plausible. In extenuation of their moral delinquencies, it should be remembered that Kashmir peasants have been oppressed from time immemorial. By the highest local official down to the village *chaukidar* (watchman) the utmost is wrung out of them. Even now, the peasantry are afraid to have good fruit trees or wear clean clothes lest they should attract notice and their apparent prosperity lead to further exactions. The subordinates of the various departments extract gratifications or else make things difficult.

The villagers are liable to compulsory service for the maintenance of communications and if necessary they must carry loads for officials and travellers. By the latter they are paid, but not always by the former. The average Kashmiri is a very casual person. A rock needed removal to enable ground to be cultivated. After drilling, the blasting charge was duly fixed, the fuse lighted and all the workers retired to safe shelter. My alarm can be imagined when I saw one of them return, after an interval, and peer down the cavity to see why the explosion had failed! I never shouted louder in my life and fortunately managed to drive him away just in time. This is a typical instance of carelessness and recklessness. So also in the mountains, with perhaps fifteen or twenty of these villagers as porters, they need a measure of patriarchal care. Especially is this the case on glaciers or steep snow slopes or when a rope is in use.

CHAPTER XVII

SOCIAL CUSTOMS & RELIGIONS

THE population of the villages of Kashmir is almost entirely Moslem. The few Hindus are chiefly minor officials attached to the various departments—local administration, land settlement, forests, etc.

In the City of Srinagar it is different. Here nearly thirty per cent. of the population is Hindu. Most Kashmiri Hindus are Brahmans. They are comparatively fair and have faces of the pure high Arian type. Assured of their position, they are not nearly so particular about caste observances as the Hindus of India. Indeed they will drink water which is brought by a Musalman and eat food which has been cooked on the boat of a Mahammedan, and will even accept Musalmani foster-mothers for their infants.

Unlike India, there is in Kashmir almost no communal tension and strife between Moslems and Hindus. The Moslems are not fanatical. Indeed their Mahammedanism is superficial, and with the masses it is chiefly saint worship, centred in the numerous shrines. These are the tombs of famous Moslems of the olden days. Hindus and Musalmans have certain customs in common. One of these is the reverence for sacred places. There are certain spots in Kashmir which are considered sacred by the votaries of both religions. Their dress too is very similar. Such differences as exist have been deliberately adopted to mark the distinction of religion. For instance, both wear coloured skull-caps, with turbans wound round. The pheran, the Kashmiri national dress, is a cotton or woollen garment rather like a smock frock coming down to below the knees. The legs and feet are bare, and grass sandals or pointed leather shoes complete the costume. Between Hindu and Mahammedan costume the following differences may be noticed. The tuck of the

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Hindu turban is on the right, the Moslem on the left. The Hindu often has an orange red vertical caste mark on the forehead between the eyes. The Hindu pheran is fastened on the left, the Musalman on the right. The Moslem pheran has short and full sleeves, the Hindu long and narrow. The nether garments of the Hindu are tight ; those of the Musulman are loose. The Moslems have their heads entirely shaven. The Hindus have a tuft of hair left on top. In the case of the women, both in dress and character, there are greater differences. The Hindu lady (Panditáni) has a white head dress. She wears a pheran, but without embroidery except on the collar and sleeves, and she wears a girdle and grass sandals. Some of these panditánis are very capable and are excellent housewives. Their devotion to their husbands almost amounts to worship. They will not even mention their names. The Musalmani on the other hand wears a turban-like red cap, studded with pins, and covered by a square of country cloth, which hangs down over the back. The panditáni loves bright colours, and her best pheran may be of a brilliant red, orange, green, violet. The Musulmani thinks bright colours are not respectable.

The pheran, an awkward and clumsy garment, little adapted to very active work, has perhaps survived because it lends itself to the convenient use of the kangri. This is a basket-covered earthenware bowl, about six inches in diameter, surmounted by a wicker handle. Into this, wood-charcoal is put. In the cold weather most Kashmiris, especially those of the poorer classes, carry this portable brazier under their pherans. The basket-work is often in actual contact with the skin. Its continued use gives rise sometimes to a special form of cancer, which is peculiar to Kashmir. The kangri is used by Moslems and Hindus, of all ages and both sexes. Equally in common is the method of husking rice, which is their staple food. Every house has its large mortar, of wood or stone, in which with pestles four or five feet long the women pound the grain and then remove the chaff by winnowing in a large fan-shaped tray.

The Hindus of the city are either shopkeepers or clerks in

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Government or other employ. Intellectually the Kashmiri pandit is distinctly abler than the native of India. He is keen on education and there are many Hindu students in the schools and colleges. Some of the most active Nationalist agitators in India are Kashmiris. The educated classes talk Urdu and also English. Kashmiri, which is the language of the masses, is difficult. It abounds in proverbs, some of which are very much to the point and often pungent.

Kashmiris are, on the whole, domesticated and fond of wife and children. To outsiders they are, however, usually unsympathetic and often show callous disregard of suffering. There are a whole series of proverbs illustrating their attitude toward men and things.

Kashmiris use three alphabets for writing their language. The Musalmans employ Persian, and the Hindus either the Nāgari or the Sāradā character. A few books, including some of the Psalms and Gospels, have been printed in the Roman character, which even for Kashmiris is really easier to learn and read.

The Hindu religion is a social system, bristling with minute ceremonial observances, binding on each individual. They come into force at birth and only cease when his body has been consumed to ashes. In olden days suttee was common and wives showed their devotion by sacrificing their lives at the same time. Every detail of family life is regulated by elaborate rites, in connection with which the priest has such preponderating influence. The birth of a Hindu boy is a time of great ceremonial activity. When three years old his head is shaved and the priests are again very much in evidence. Between the ages of seven and thirteen he assumes the sacred thread and thereupon becomes a true Brahman. Then follows his marriage and here, once more, Hindu and Musalman customs are very similar. In both cases it is the youth's apotheosis. For the brief period of one day he and his bride have the distinction of being called Maharajah and Maharani. Clad in rich robes of cloth of gold and with turban adorned with egret feathers, the bridegroom rides forth. Over his head an umbrella is held by a Musalman. Hindu

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attendants carry wands surmounted by yaks' tails. Accompanied by zealous and noisy musicians, he passes on to greet his bride. In the case of Moslems the wedding procession is often headed by a group of swordsmen, who dance and wave their naked weapons to the rhythm of drums.

Early marriages are the rule in Kashmir, the bride until recently often being less than thirteen years of age. The lowest legal age is now 14 years.

The Hindus of Kashmir are Saivites or worshippers of the God Shiva, the presiding Deity over mountains and springs, the controller of the great and terrifying powers of Nature. Any unusual phenomenon—intermittent springs as at Ranbir Singhapura, springs which change their colour from time to time, as at Tullamulla, bright red rocks, jagged peaks, especially those of conical shape—are all objects of worship, and the goal of countless pilgrims.

Parda, although adopted by the upper classes, is not general. Mahammedan women, when walking in the City, often wear the *bourka*, a long cotton gown, completely enveloping the person, and with small netted openings for the eyes.

Kashmir is very rich in folklore. Many of the stories are about the wonderful doings of pirs and rishis, and about former rulers, such for instance as Zainulabadin. With us there are many who regard the number 13 with suspicion. In Kashmir the number 11 has peculiar significance, and is often introduced into their stories.

Visitors to Kashmir usually come mostly into contact with the boatpeople. In many ways these are typical of the Kashmiri people. They are active and hard-working, very mendacious and often quarrelsome. Their morality leaves very much to be desired. This is, no doubt, partly due to the conditions under which they live and the limited accommodation in their boats. Of recent years the great increase in number of large houseboats, the residence of British settlers in Kashmir, or occupied by visitors in the summer, has brought an era of great prosperity to the boatmen, or *hanjis* as they are called. Many now own boats. They are clever and can turn their hands to any work. One

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will cook, others wait at table or do the work of butler, house- and parlour-maid, in addition to satisfying the claims of navigation. Some now act as lodging-house keepers or contractors, and for a fixed monthly payment they supply accommodation, board and service. As a class they are terribly dishonest, and visitors do well to be on their guard. They are, however, interesting and plausible people, full of yarns. The women are active and energetic but quarrelsome. Their children are often attractive.

Life in Kashmir, so far as the people are concerned, does not seem to include much amusement in the way of games. The children play hop-sotch and tip-cat ; and cricket and football, introduced from the West, are finding increasing favour. With the village people, however, life is too serious for games ; and children, beginning as early as their fourth and fifth year, fetch water, go into the jungle for firewood, supplement their scanty vegetable diet by digging up edible plants, and tend the cattle, taking them to the village flocks daily, in the early morning, up to the nearest pastures, and returning with them in the evening.

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